

III. OBITUARY NOTICES.

Professor Charles Rieu, Ph.D., M.A.

ON the morning of Wednesday, March 19 of this year (1902), after an illness of less than three days, there passed away from us one of the greatest Oriental scholars of our time, and one who, notwithstanding his modest and unassuming character, probably enjoyed a higher and wider reputation in scholarly circles than almost any Orientalist of this age. The width and depth of his scholarship were such as to command the admiration of all who were capable of appreciating his rare attainments; while his gentle and amiable disposition, his constant readiness to place at the disposal of all who needed them the vast stores of his learning, and his eagerness to see only the good points in the work and characters of others, earned him the deep affection and gratitude of all—especially his younger fellow-workers—who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship. His death, alike to his friends and to those branches of learning to which he devoted his long and laborious life, is an irreparable loss; yet in its circumstances it was, we may be sure, such as he himself would have most desired; for after an active and fruitful life of 82 years (during nearly 60 years of which he enjoyed a European reputation as an Orientalist of the first rank) he passed quietly away, after a brief and comparatively painless illness, having been in perfect health until within three days of the end, and with a mind clear and tranquil to the last.

Dr. Rieu was born at Geneva in 1820, and, on leaving school at the age of 15, entered the Académie de Genève in November, 1835. There he remained for four years, of which the first three were passed in the Faculty of Philosophy, and the last in that of Science. During a part of this period he studied under Jean Humbert, who (like Freytag, with whom he afterwards pursued his studies) was a pupil of the great French Orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy.

In the Autumn of 1840 he left Geneva for the University of Bonn, where he was inscribed in the Philosophical Faculty on October 30 of that year, and where he remained till the Summer of 1843, when he received his doctor's degree and published his dissertation on Abu'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí, one of the most interesting and at the same time most difficult Arabic poets, which dissertation at once assured his reputation as an Arabic scholar. A series of letters to his parents, ranging over the greater portion of this period (January, 1841 - June, 1843), which the kindness of his widow and daughter has placed at my disposal, throws much light on his life and work at this time. He at once began to read Arabic with Freytag and Sanskrit with Lassen, but was obliged at first, in addition to the ordinary classical and historical studies required by the University in that Faculty, to devote a good deal of time to learning to speak, understand, and write German and Latin, candidates for the Doctor's degree being at that time compelled in the Prussian Universities both to speak and write the latter language in the exercises required for admission thereto. At a later period of his residence at Bonn he read Arabic both with Freytag and Gildemeister (who, though a comparatively young man, seems to have been a more efficient and stimulating teacher than his older colleague), and also received private instruction in Hebrew.

In 1843, as already said, Dr. Rieu completed his studies and received his degree at Bonn, and published his dissertation on Abu'l-'Alá, which was entitled *De Abu'l-Alá poetæ arabici vitâ et carminibus*. About a year later (November 8, 1844) he was elected a member of the French Société Asiatique, on the proposal of Burnouf and Reinaud. In 1847 was published at St. Petersburg Hemachandra's Sanskrit Dictionary, the *Abhidana chintamani*, in the production of which Dr. Rieu collaborated with Böhtlingk, for whom he transcribed the unique MS. of the Bodleian. In the same year he entered the British Museum, in which for nearly half a century he was one of the most zealous and indispensable officers. There, indeed, was accomplished the

great and immortal work of his life, to wit, the preparation and publication of such catalogues of the vast and precious collections of Oriental MSS. there preserved as must ever remain the *beau idéal* of such work, and the indispensable companions of every student of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature. In 1867 Dr. Rieu was nominated Curator of the Oriental MSS. in the Museum, and four years later he completed (in 1871) the second part of the *Catalogus Codicum Manucriptorum Orientalium*, or older Catalogue of the Arabic MSS., of which the first portion had been published by Cureton in 1846. This was followed successively by the *Catalogue of Persian MSS.* (1879–1883), the *Catalogue of Turkish MSS.* (1888), the *Arabic Supplement* (1894), and the *Persian Supplement* (1895). These seven volumes constitute a veritable treasury of knowledge concerning all that relates to these three chief branches of Muḥammadan literature and literary history, and give evidence of an amount of labour and a degree of critical scholarship which only those who have attempted a similar task can fully realize. Only so great a scholar and so indefatigable a student, working on so rich and copious a collection of manuscripts, could have produced so monumental a series of catalogues, which will probably remain unequalled and indispensable so long as Muḥammadan literature is studied and appreciated.

In 1893 (nearly two years before he actually severed his connection with the British Museum, and, at the invitation of the Electors to the Sir Thomas Adams' Professorship of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, accepted that Chair, rendered vacant by the death of Professor W. Robertson Smith in March, 1894) Dr. Rieu, who had already nominally retired from his post in the Museum (which, however, till the end of his life, he was ever ready to aid with his counsels), celebrated the jubilee of his Doctorate, and received on this occasion (September 6, 1894) the most flattering congratulatory address from the University of Bonn, who thus fittingly gave public recognition to the eminent services to learning of her illustrious son, "*qui Arabicis, Persicis, Turcicis Musei Britannici Codicibus summá*

cum curâ singularique doctrinâ descriptis ad vastos litterarum thesauros omnibus aditum patefecit, adeuntes semper consilio atque opera comiter adjuvit."

It was in the late Autumn of 1894 that Dr. Rieu's election to the Chair in which I now most unworthily succeed him took place. He neither offered himself as a candidate for this distinction, nor was he easily persuaded to accept it, until he was convinced that it was the earnest desire of those most concerned that he should do so. At the age which he had then attained (nearly 75) he had the right to demand a well-earned repose rather than new obligations and responsibilities; but it was not in his nature to lay aside, ere he was compelled, the labours which are at once the scholar's duty and pleasure, or to deprive this University, which sought and needed his help, of the honour of including another illustrious name in the roll of those who have laboured for 270 years to make the Oriental School of Cambridge the best, as it is the oldest, in Great Britain. Of the Chair founded by Sir Thomas Adams in 1632 Dr. Rieu was the sixteenth occupant, and the only one who was not a native of the British Islands; a fact which, to the writer's mind, is equally honourable to the country which produced so illustrious a scholar and the country which offered him so great and useful a career. How much consolation and hope does this reflection contain: that in the realms of science at least we see some dim foreshadowing of that universal brotherhood of mankind which elsewhere is but dreamed of and hoped for, wherein the limitations of nationalities and tongues vanish away, and even East and West, so widely separated by thought, custom, feeling, and belief, are reconciled in the Light of that Knowledge which is the Creator's Supreme Attribute and the student's ultimate goal.

EDWARD G. BROWNE.

John Beames.

BORN JUNE 21, 1837.

DIED MAY 24, 1902.

THE Royal Asiatic Society has lost one of its most distinguished members, and Oriental scholarship one of its most eminent interpreters, by the death of Mr. John Beames, which took place after a long illness at Clevedon, in Somerset, on Saturday, the 24th of last May.

John Beames was born at Greenwich Hospital on the 21st of June, 1837. He was the eldest son of the Rev. Thomas Beames, Preacher of St. James's, Piccadilly, and grandson of John Beames, Esq., K.C., Bencher of Lincoln's Inn. He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School under Dr. Hessing, and, while there, obtained an appointment in the Indian Civil Service, and proceeded to Haileybury College. He studied at Haileybury during the years 1856-7, in his fourth term obtaining the Classic and Sanskrit prizes and the Persian medal. He arrived in India in the year 1858, and served in the Panjab from March, 1859, to late in 1861. From December, 1861, to the conclusion of his service he was employed in the Bengal Presidency, becoming a permanent Collector in the year 1867, a Commissioner in 1881, and twice officiating as a Member of the Board of Revenue. On his retirement from the Indian Civil Service in March, 1893, he had thus gained the rare experience of having worked in the Mufaṣṣal of two widely distant provinces, and this was no doubt one of the causes of that wide grasp which he exhibited in dealing with all things Indian. To him were equally familiar, from practical contact with the village people who spoke them, the rough patois of the Jats of the Panjab, the smooth-flowing Oṛiyā, the clipped dialect of a Bengali peasant, and the clear-cut, practical Bhojpurī of Bihār.

We have seen that Mr. Beames distinguished himself by his attainments in Oriental languages while he was yet in Haileybury. In India he served an apprenticeship of seven years, laying the foundations of that encyclopædic, yet accurate, knowledge of things pertaining to the East which

afterwards became the mark of all that he wrote. His first essays appeared in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* in the year 1866, shortly after he had been placed in charge of the frontier district of Campāran in Bihār. These dealt with the now well-worn topic of the advisability or otherwise of retaining the Arabic element in the official form of Hindōstānī. In the previous year his attention had been drawn to Bishop Caldwell's *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, and it immediately occurred to him that a similar book was much wanted for the Aryan group. The result was the commencement in 1866 of those studies which bore their first ripe fruit in 1872. In the meantime other shorter but important works issued from his pen. The earliest was his well-known *Outlines of Indian Philology*,¹ the first attempt to prepare a scientific general account of all the languages then known to be spoken in India. Much of this work is now of course out of date, but parts of it, notably the chapter entitled "Hints on observing and recording a new language," are as valuable to-day as they were when first published. In 1868 we have two excellent papers in the *Journal of this Society*—one on the Magar language of Nēpāl, and the other on the form of Bhojpuri spoken in Campāran. The latter was for many years the only account in existence of any dialect of Bihārī (the language of over thirty-six millions of Indo-Aryans), and the former (if we except Hodgson's short vocabulary) the only account of one of the most important hill languages of Nēpāl.

Mr. Beames's connection with the Bengal Asiatic Society lasted until the year 1885. During the twenty years which succeeded his first essay, its *Journal* was enriched by many contributions from his pen. Essays on Cand Bardai and other old Hindī authors were interspersed with studies on the antiquities and history of Orissa (1870–1883). In 1884–85 appeared his important articles on the Geography of India in the Reign of Akbar. During the same period the *Indian Antiquary* numbered him among the brilliant band of its

¹ Written in 1866: 1st ed. 1867, 2nd ed. 1868.

earlier writers, and its pages contain many careful reviews of the works of other scholars, besides original articles of great interest on the early literature of Bengal proper and Orissa.

In 1869 appeared his well-known edition of Sir Henry Elliot's *Supplemental Glossary of Indian Terms*, a work which it is superfluous to praise. Twenty-two years afterwards, in 1891, was published his excellent Bengali Grammar, the first book of its kind which attempted to deal, not only with the inflated language of modern Bengali literature, but also with the altogether different spoken tongue. After his retirement he wrote for the most part in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*. At one time he contemplated the preparation of a Prakrit Dictionary, but I believe that, not receiving sufficient encouragement from publishers, he abandoned the scheme. At the time of his death he was engaged on a translation from the Turkī of Baber's Memoirs.

I have hitherto omitted mention of the work on which his reputation chiefly rests, the *Comparative Grammar of the Aryan Languages of India*, commenced in 1866, and published volume by volume in 1872, 1875, and 1879. The year 1872 witnessed the simultaneous appearance of three accounts of the growth of the modern Aryan vernaculars of India—Dr. Trumpp's *Sindhī Grammar*, Dr. Hoernle's *Essays in aid of a Comparative Grammar of the Gaurian Languages*, and the first volume of Mr. Beames's work. The three scholars proceeded, quite independently, on similar lines. All three emphasized the importance of the Prakrits in the development of the modern languages, and made systematic studies of the laws of that development. But Dr. Trumpp's Grammar referred mainly to Sindhī, and, so far as comparative philology is concerned, remained only a brilliant fragment; Dr. Hoernle's *Essays* (many of the conclusions of which were afterwards adopted with full acknowledgment by Mr. Beames) were 'essays' in the strict sense of the term, destined to be the foundation of the admirable volume published in 1880; while Mr. Beames was the first to issue a work deliberately intended to cover the whole ground of the subject. "Whether I have done well or ill," he says

in his preface, "the book was meant to be a Comparative Grammar, and I have called it so accordingly." It is difficult to decide which to admire most in this Grammar, the learning displayed, or the clearness with which the results of that learning are put forth. That parts of it have been superseded by later inquiries must, of course, be conceded, but this cannot prevent our appreciation of the solid erudition, combined with sobriety of argument, which adorns every page. Personally, the debt which I owe to these volumes is great, and I am glad to have this opportunity of acknowledging it.

Although for many years under the same Government in India, our lines were mostly cast in widely different parts of the country, and we seldom met. But we often corresponded, and never without the debt being on my side. I still remember the first letter I received from him, in the year 1878 or 1879, in answer to one from me about a small point in Maithili grammar. In those days philology was not popular in India, and civilians who collected information regarding the languages of the country were apt to be looked down upon as shirking their legitimate duties. This letter of Mr. Beames, coming as it did from one high above me in my own service, was the first word of encouragement to proceed with my studies which I received from an official. One of his last acts of kindness to me was to revise the proofs of the Bengali section of the Linguistic Survey of India, and to offer me quite a number of invaluable hints and suggestions. He had a trenchant pen, and could wield it with effect when he considered it to be necessary, but the numerous references in his *magnum opus* to the opinions of other scholars showed that he possessed a double portion of the spirit of Saraswatī—a just confidence in his own great store of learning, and an ungrudging recognition of the discoveries made by other students in the same line of research as that in which he had an acknowledged claim to be recognized as one of the first authorities.

G. A. G.

Léon Feer.

YET another name has dropped out of the short list of the older living Orientalists. M. Léon Feer, the well-known Sanskrit and Tibetan scholar, died in Paris, March 10th of the present year.

Léon Feer was born at Rouen on the 22nd November, 1830. In 1864 he was appointed to a Paris professorship, succeeding M. Foucaux in the Chair of Tibetan originally created for the Bibliothèque Nationale and transferred in 1865 to the École des Langues Orientales. He afterwards (1869) held a lectureship in Tibetan and Mongol at the Collège de France. To this period (1864 to 1872) belong his earlier works, *Ruines de la Ninive* and *La Puissance et la civilisation mongoles au xiii^{ème} siècle*.

In 1872 M. Feer entered the MS. Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale. He passed from promotion to promotion to be *bibliothécaire* of his department, where he remained working steadfastly till his death, in spite of failing health and growing infirmity in later years. In 1900 he was appointed *Conservateur-Adjoint* of the great national collection.

Outside his special field—or fields—of work M. Léon Feer published a number of articles in the *Revue Contemporaine*, *Revue des deux mondes*, *Revue Chrétienne*, *Revue des Cours publics*, and *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français*. But we are here chiefly concerned with his work in Buddhist literature, work which has the enduring merit of having brought within reach important texts from widely separated regions of this great field of research.

M. Feer's learning embraced Tibetan and Mongol, Sanskrit and Pāli. He was therefore able to contribute largely to our knowledge both of the Buddhism of countries where the documents have the peculiar interest of works translated into non-Indian languages from the Sanskrit, and the Buddhism of the school that preserves its characteristic and rich literature in a purely Indian dress.

The first in order of his translations was the *Sūtra en quarante-deux articles* (1878). The following were afterwards published in the *Annales du Musée Guimet*: a translation of the *Analyse du Kandjour et du Tandjour* of Csoma de Körös, with many additions and notes (vol. ii of the *Annales*), *Fragments extraits du Kandjour*, translated from the Tibetan (vol. v), and the *Avadānaçataka; cent légendes bouddhiques*, from the Sanskrit (vol. xviii).

In the *Bibliothèque orientale élzévirienne* series appeared a translation by M. Feer of the Tibetan version of the *Dhammapada*, and in the *Collection de Contes et de Chansons populaires* a translation from Bengali under the title *Contes Indiens; les trente-deux récits du trône*.

Léon Feer's greatest service to Pāli scholarship was his edition of the *Samyutta-nikāya* for the Pāli Text Society. It was his last long work.

He contributed articles to the *Grande Encyclopédie*, and was one of the oldest collaborators in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*. An obituary notice in the last-named review acknowledges the value of his contributions on Tibetan subjects, in which his competence was shared by very few. He was also an unwearied contributor to the *Journal Asiatique* till within a few months of his death.

It was as Librarian of the MS. Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale that most of the younger Orientalists knew him best, and here all who sought his help had experience of his unselfish kindness and readiness to lend his time and learning and official authority to smooth the way of their researches.

The cataloguing of Eugene Burnouf's papers (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale) fell to M. Feer. It must have been a truly congenial task to him, for he had the scholar's lovable piety towards the memory, works, and relics of a past generation of great Orientalists. The present writer remembers the touching pleasure with which he once showed her a manuscript in Sir William Jones' handwriting, an unfinished poem that had not the remotest connection with *indianisme*.

M. Feer lived a secluded life. Modesty, a certain shyness, and heart-whole devotion to his work were so much his leading characteristics that it is difficult to bring out a distinct portrait of this reserved but kindly personality. Perhaps the plain record of his long and patient labours is not an unfitting tribute to his memory.

IV. NOTES AND NEWS.

PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS has been elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences.

DR. M. A. STEIN, of the Indian Educational Service, has, with the sanction of H.M.'s Secretary of State for India, been placed on eight months' special duty in England in order to prepare a detailed report on the results of his recent journey of archæological and topographical exploration in Chinese Turkestan. Dr. Stein's Preliminary Report on these explorations, issued in November last, and already noticed in the J.R.A.S., showed the extent of the antiquarian and other materials brought back from this journey and awaiting detailed examination.

New Appointments.

MR. E. G. BROWNE has been appointed Adams Professor of Arabic at Cambridge.

DR. LIEBICH has been appointed Professor Ordinarius at Breslau, and Dr. WINTERNITZ Professor Ordinarius at the German University at Prag.

SYED ALI BILGRAMI has been appointed Reader in Marathi at Cambridge.

PROFESSOR BENDALL has been appointed University Lecturer in Sanskrit at Cambridge.