

capacities of which two are worthy of note. He was several times Secretary, and from 1904-7 he was Vice-President of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Just before his final departure from Shanghai he was President of the American Association of China. After his retirement he took an active part as a member of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and was also on the committee of the China Association.

He had many Chinese honours. He was given the degree of Doctor of Laws by the Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1913; and in 1924 his own university, Harvard, conferred on him the same honour.

At the end of 1933 his health failed rapidly and he died of heart exhaustion on 13th February, 1934. A man of kindly disposition and winning personality, he left behind him many who held him in great affection. Modest and retiring he did nothing to advertise his achievements. But his remarkable series of works, the triumph of character, genius, and industry over difficulties, will live and speak for him; and we may well believe that Canada, the country of his birth, together with America, China, and England, the countries of his adoption, will all hold his memory in honour.

6.

C. A. V. BOWRA.

Guy le Strange

Born at Hunstanton in 1854, Guy le Strange was one of our most distinguished members, and also one of the oldest, his connexion with the Society having been unbroken since 1880, when he was elected during the second presidency of Sir Henry Rawlinson, till his death last year, on 24th December, at Cambridge. Between 1880 and 1912, he contributed to the *Journal* many valuable articles, chiefly on Muslim geography, and his Description of the province of Fárs, translated from the *Fársnâma* of Ibn al-Balkhî, was published in 1912, in the Asiatic Society Series of Monographs.

Le Strange passed a good deal of his life abroad, first at Paris, where he lived for a time with his mother after leaving school, and then at Florence. In Paris he came under the influence of Julius Mohl, well-known as editor and translator of the *Sháhnáma*, who inspired him with enthusiasm for Persia and Persian literature; and attended the lectures of Stanislas Guyard on Arabic. His initiation in Orientalism was followed by a visit to Persia. He spent three years (1877–80) in making himself familiar with the country and its people, and mastering the language. The immediate result was an inviting little book, in which W. H. D. Haggard collaborated—the text, with translation, vocabulary, and notes, of a modern Persian play, the *Vazír of Lankurán*. As always, he writes with natural ease and force, and the notes are not without characteristic touches of racy humour, e.g. on the word *farrásh*: “there is no name in English for a servant who is at the same time ‘housemaid’ and ‘executioner’.” After this excursion into the lighter side of Persian life, Le Strange settled down to work on his favourite subject. To his original and eminently practical mind it soon became clear that “if Moslem history is ever to be made interesting, and indeed to be rightly understood, the historical geography of the nearer East during the Middle Ages must be thoroughly worked out”. The extent, value, and interest of his contribution to a complete survey of the immense field earned for him a European reputation, and are so evident that his own estimate of it as “a first attempt” must appear excessively modest.

Large gaps, of course, remain for future research, and the author does not profess to give full details of all the ground he has covered; but within these limits no one taking a broad view of his work can fail to admire either the solidity of its learning or the sagacity of its conclusions or the literary skill shown in its composition. Only three books indispensable to students of Islam need be mentioned here: *Palestine under the Moslems* (1890), *Baghdad during the*

Abbasid Caliphate (1900), and *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (1905).

Le Strange had long been troubled with weak sight, and from 1912 forward he was on the verge of total blindness. Nevertheless, he continued to read and write under difficulties which most men would have found insuperable. His Cambridge friends could be pretty sure of meeting him any morning in the University Library and being entertained with some pungent sally or lively conversation. He busied himself with Spanish and published translations from that language—González de Clavijo's *Embassy to Tamerlane* and the *Relaciones* of Don Juan of Persia; also a selection of ballads. With his old friend and colleague, E. G. Browne, who was the main cause of his settling in Cambridge, he took an active part in the affairs of the Gibb Memorial Trust, and its publications include several volumes edited by him. If, in editing and translating, he sometimes paid more attention to matter than to form and committed faults which an exact philologist might have escaped, these were only the small defects of great qualities. All who knew him will endorse the tribute in *The Times* obituary notice from one of those who knew him best: "He was the kindest and most generous of men; he loved young folk as well as his peers, and he was never without a gratuitous pupil, old or young, in Persian, Arabic, or Spanish." It may be added that when his sight failed, he offered many rare books in his library to friends, at absurdly low prices fixed by himself. The present writer acquired a sumptuously bound copy of Turner-Macan's *Sháhnáma*, which bears the inscription, "G. le Strange. Jan. 1875. Paris." That date marks the beginning of sixty years' work carried on with tireless energy and indomitable courage.

2.

R. A. NICHOLSON.