

Musulmans are Hindúized, or keep away from us, so that our people don't understand or sympathize with them as they might; and in Haidarabad—where the higher classes have retained Western ways and ideas—I have found that my Persian and Afghan experience put me quite *en rapport* with them."

Sir Oliver St. John was a sportsman of no mean repute, and among his adventures with wild animals, one with a tiger in India (showing how he risked his life to save a comrade), and one with a lioness in Persia, have a special interest, and are to be read in print. He was, moreover, a geographer of distinction, and a naturalist, but in late years little able to pursue any scientific research owing to the continuous and urgent demands of the public service.

Zealous and enthusiastic in his profession, whether in its scientific, military, or political aspect, there is no doubt that his re-transfer from Maisúr to Quetta was a move fully in accordance with St. John's tastes and wishes. From the latest Indian papers we learn that, at the time of his lamented death, "he had only arrived a little more than a fortnight before at Quetta," having left, as truly stated by the *Times of India*, "perhaps the pleasantest billet in India . . . for one that gave a better field to his active mind and keen interest in public affairs." F. J. G.

#### IV. NOTES AND NEWS.

*Sir Henry Layard*, P.C., G.C.B., M.R.A.S., has received from Germany the very distinguished *Ordre pour la Mérite* for his services to Assyrian archæology.

*A Jain God*.—A touching exposition of unadulterated heathenism—we use the word in its Christian sense—is displayed in the petition of the Jaini sect of Gwalior to the Viceroy. They request his Excellency's assistance, by pressure brought to bear upon the Gwalior Durbar by the Governor-General's Agent in Central India, to convert their "immage," known as Ruth Biman, into a pucca

god. At present it is only an "immagine," and, to quote the petition, "cannot be considered a god unless it is taken with procession into the streets and accompanied by several immages which come from other stations, and these immages take the new immagine to the temple." The public procession alone confers divinity, it appears; for "until the procession is not performed a new immagine is not considered a god according to our religion." The spectacle of the Viceroy, called upon to assist the Jaini bunnias of Gwalior to make an "immagine" into a god, should give subject for serious reflection to Exeter Hall. India, however, has not been, and is now less than ever, governed on Exeter Hall lines; and, from the point of view of Government policy, the Jaini petitioners seem to have made out a case which in British territory would certainly be listened to. They appear to have suffered from Brahmin hostility; their temple has been broken into and their image broken. They are, therefore, in their own eyes without a god, and cannot, until the new image is deified by orthodox rites, perform the ceremony of marriage. Hence, for the last four years, because the Gwalior Durbar refuses to sanction the performance of the proper processional rites, the girls in the sect have been growing up unmarried. As a rough and ready local cure for early marriage this may not be a matter for grief; but the complainants are naturally miserable, and they make generous offers to obtain a remedy for their grievance, being willing to pay for any extra police force which may be needed for the protection of their procession against Brahmin hostility. In British India, where followers of every creed are protected in the performance of their religious rites by the State, such an offer would be as unnecessary as the reason for making it. Interfering, however, with religious matters in Native States is, probably, not a job for which the Government of India has much liking.—*Civil and Military Gazette.*

*Discovery of Ancient MSS.*—Lieutenant Bower's previous Central Asian travels will have proved of benefit to the world at large in other ways than by ridding it of a murderous villain like Dad Muhammad. He discovered

the remains of a buried city in the wilds, and had excavations made on a small scale, resulting in the discovery of some old MSS. These were entrusted to Dr. Hoernle for investigation, and he reports that they compose a medical treatise or, rather, three medical treatises in different hands and of great antiquity. The oldest is Buddhist, of the fourth or fifth century, so that it must be about 1400 years old; and Dr. Hoernle says it is the oldest MS. yet found in this part of the world, and of great value.—*Overland Mail*.

*Samarkand Coins in Skye*.—At the close of 1890 a hoard of broken brooches, ingots, and coins was accidentally discovered in a rabbit burrow on the face of a cliff by the Storr Rock, near Portree, in Skye. In addition to ninety Anglo-Saxon coins (silver pennies) struck between 891 and 941 by Archbishop Plegmund, Edward the Elder, Sitric of Northumbria, and Athelstan, this hoard contains seventeen Oriental (silver) coins struck at Samarkand and Esh Shash between A.H. 279 and A.H. 320 (A.D. 892–942) by Ismael ibn Ahmed, Ahmed ibn Ismael, and Nasr II. ibn Ahmed. These seventeen coins thus all belong to the Sámánis series. There is also reported to be a further Oriental coin, the identity of which has not yet been determined, farther than that it is of the Abbasside series, mint and date illegible. The discovery of the Cufic coins in the Isles is not without precedent, a similar discovery having been made in 1858 in the Orkneys (Skaill Hoard). The occurrence of these Asiatic coins is usually attributed to the Vikings, whose brooches, etc., are buried with them, but neither of these hoards was a burial deposit. As the latest Sámánis coin was struck in A.D. 931, and as no Saxon coin is of a reign subsequent to Athelstan, the date of deposit may be fixed with tolerable certainty as between A.D. 932 and A.D. 941. A paper (from which the above has been taken) was read upon this hoard in May last before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, by Mr. A. B. Richardson, the Society's Curator of Coins. In accordance with the usual practice, it is probable that this important hoard will be kept intact, and ultimately deposited under

the charge of Dr. Anderson in the National Museum of Scottish Antiquities, side by side with the Skail hoard of 1858. At present it is in the custody of the Queen's Remembrancer in Scotland as 'treasure trove.'

*Mr. Gerald Portal*, C.B., who has just been appointed H.M. Consul-General at Zanzibar, in succession to Sir E. Evan Smith, has written a narrative of his adventurous mission to Abyssinia in 1887-1888, when the British Government sent him to endeavour to mediate between King Johannis and the Italians after the massacre of Dogali. Accompanied only by two Europeans and a few native servants, Mr. Portal penetrated for several hundred miles into the interior, successfully overcoming the grave difficulties of the route, and the undisguised hostility of the Abyssinian General, Ras Alula. Even when he reached the King's quarters, he was imprisoned for a considerable time while the great Council of Chiefs was deciding whether he and his companions should be put to death or allowed to return home; fortunately the decision was in Mr. Portal's favour. The book, which will be illustrated, will be published shortly by Edward Arnold.

In the list of lectures proposed for next term by the board for oriental studies at Cambridge, we notice that Mr. S. A. Strong will lecture on Assyrian, provided that a class can be formed.

*Captain Léon Berger*, military attaché of the embassy at Constantinople, has sent to the Académie des Inscriptions the rubbing of a bas-relief which he took, at the height of 250 metres from the ground, in the gorge of Cheïkane, in the mountainous region, hitherto little explored, which separates the ancient Babylonia from Media and Persia. The design resembles a bas-relief from the same tract recorded by Sir Henry Rawlinson. Despite the coarse execution, it is evidently the work of a people under the influence of the ancient Chaldean civilization, anterior to the style properly called Assyrian. The figure is that of a man with hair and beard shaven, his waist girt with a fringed cloth, and on his head a turban, the mitra which, according to Herodotus, distinguished the Kissaei. At the side is an inscription in

cuneiform characters, arranged in vertical lines and divided by compartments, as upon the statues of Tello.

The last number of *L'Anthropologie*—the bi-monthly periodical in which are incorporated the *Matériaux pour l'Histoire de l'Homme*, the *Revue d'Anthropologie*, and the *Revue d'Ethnographie*—contains an elaborate article, illustrated with photographs, upon the Veddahs of Ceylon, by M. Emile Deschamps, who visited the island in the course of an official mission of ethnological research in the East. Though he has not added much to our actual knowledge of this curious people, his conclusions as to their probable origin differ in several important respects from those generally received. In the first place, he would regard them as of Aryan blood, having reached Ceylon from India in prehistoric times, and being identical with the Yakkhas, demon-worshippers whom Vijaya found there when he conquered the island in 477 B.C. Secondly, he considers their present degraded condition to be due, not to the absence but to the loss of a previous culture, owing to their having taken refuge in the jungles from the tyranny of their conquerors. Their physical traits he attributes to an early mixture with aboriginal races. The Singhalese proper are the result of an admixture of the conquerors with a subjugated portion of the Yakkhas or Veddahs, and also with another early race of Aryan origin who are to be traced at the present time in the Rhodias.

*M. James Darmesteter.*—We are very pleased to hear that this distinguished scholar, the Secretary of the Société Asiatique, will deliver the Hibbert Lectures next year, his subject being "The Religion of the Parsees." The trustees have presented a set of their publications, which have so much importance for Oriental studies, to the Library of our Society. M. Darmesteter, who is an excellent English scholar, and whose wife is an accomplished and successful English writer, was present at our General Meeting in April, and took part in the discussion.