

many systems and ideas ; thus, when 'Abd al-Bahā, the then head of the Bahā'ī community, visited Oxford, his address was delivered in this building. Till almost the end of his life his physical and intellectual vigour were unimpaired.

D. S. M.

Ya'kub Sarruf

On Sunday, 10th July, literary and scientific circles in Cairo were grieved to learn of the death after a short illness of Dr. Y. Şarrūf, editor of the *Mukṭataf*, by far the most esteemed as well as the oldest of the Arabic periodicals, and a member of this Society since 1904. The esteem wherein he was held in Cairo appears in the account of his funeral,¹ which was attended by Cabinet ministers and distinguished members of all professions, and the messages sent to his family from King Fuad, at that time in London, and other prominent political personages, learned bodies, etc. His death followed by less than a year and a quarter the celebrations of the Jubilee of the *Mukṭataf*, which were initiated by the popular authoress, Mlle May, and of which the proceedings are recorded in the "Golden Volume" presented to subscribers to that magazine. A fairly lengthy biography of him is given by Elias Zakhoura in his work on the Celebrities of Egypt, dated 1897,² from which the following details are taken.

Şarrūf was born 18th July, 1852, in the Lebanon, and studied at the American University of Beyrut, where he took a B.Sc. in 1870. For the next two years he was employed as lecturer in Arabic to the American mission in Sidon, after which he was principal for a year of the College established by the Americans in the Syrian Tripoli. He then returned to Beyrut as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Science. "There was no experiment mentioned in the text-books of

¹ See the *Mokattam* of 13th July.

² مرآة العصر

chemistry which he did not demonstrate to his class, however dangerous it might be." During his tenure of this post at Beyrut he composed works on chemistry, toxicology, and other sciences, and translated books on various subjects from English and French into Arabic, partly with the co-operation of Dr. Fāris Nimr.

He is best known as editor of the *Muḳtataf*, which was founded by him and his friend in Beyrut in 1876. In 1885 they migrated to Cairo, and in 1889, when the daily newspaper *Mokattam* was started, Fāris Nimr devoted himself to this, while Ṣarrūf directed and very largely composed the monthly. The *Muḳtataf* seems in some respects to have been modelled on our *Nineteenth Century*, from which, as from other high-class magazines, it often reproduced articles; there can be no doubt that it has played a prominent part in familiarizing its Egyptian and Syrian readers with European science and literature. The Arabic in which it is written, while free from pedantry, has a high reputation for purity and elegance. For a time he and his colleague edited a less serious journal called *al-Laṭā'if*.

My own acquaintance with him dates from the beginning of the century, and I venture to publish the last letter which I received from him some three months ago.

حضرة الصديق الفاضل الاستاذ مر جوليوت حفظه الله
 اما بعد فقد ارسلتم الي منذ سنتين او اكثر رسالة عن
 مكتشفات حميرية فيها صور الكتابات التي كشفت
 وصور بعض التماثيل وقد عنيت حينئذ حتى نقلت كلماتها
 الحميرية الى ما صارت اليه في العربية بشيء قليل من
 التحريف او التصحيف حسبما يقع عادة في انتقال الالفاظ

من قوم الى قوم او من زمن الى زمن وكتبت ذلك على الرسالة نفسها ثم افتقدتها الآن فلم اجدها والظاهر انها فقدت حين انتقالنا من البيت الذي كنا فيه الى بيت بنيناه حديثا. ولا اعلم من اين اطلب نسخة اخرى فاذا استطعتم ان ترسلوا لي نسخة اخرى فذلك من فضلكم. واذا تيسر لكم المجيء الى مصر قريبا فاننا نسر بان تشرفونا في بيتنا الجديد ودمتم بخير وسلامة

المخلص يعقوب صروف

(The purport of this letter is that having in the perusal of my paper on "Two South Arabian Inscriptions"¹ noted down the Arabic analogues of the South Arabian words, which by ordinary processes of attrition had developed into the former, he had during a *déménagement* lost his copy, and requests me, if possible, to send him another. This, of course, I immediately did.)

D. S. M.

¹ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. xi (1925).