

OBITUARY NOTICES

SIR CHARLES JAMES LYALL

ON September 1 Sir Charles James Lyall, K.C.S.I., one of the Vice-Presidents of the Royal Asiatic Society, died at his London residence in his 76th year, deeply mourned by all who knew him. His career was a remarkable combination of practical activity and literary achievement of the highest order. For thirty years he was engaged in the arduous work of Indian administration, and for twelve more years he held an important post at the India Office. Yet in his spare moments he acquired an amount of learning which gained for him a place among the most eminent Orientalists of our time.

At Balliol College, Oxford, he distinguished himself as a student of Hebrew, and thus when he went to India, in 1867, he already possessed some knowledge of Semitic philology. In subsequent years his favourite study was Arabic, in particular Arabic poetry of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period. But at the same time he devoted much attention to some of the modern Indian dialects, as is shown by his *Sketch of the Hindostani Language* (1880) and the articles which he contributed to the ninth and eleventh editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In 1885 appeared his *Translations from Ancient Arabian Poetry*. Most of the pieces contained in it are taken from the *Ḥamāsah* of Abū Tammām, edited long before by Freytag, but some are from sources which had never been published. It was the aim of Sir Charles to give the English reader a vivid and accurate idea of the genius of Arabian poetry, and in this he succeeded far better than any other English scholar who has undertaken this task. The translations are in metres, more or less resembling those of the Arabic, but rhyme is not attempted. This method he followed also in his later works, and, though it is impossible

in English to reproduce the exact effect of purely quantitative metres, such as those of the Greeks and Arabs, it must be admitted by all that he displayed astonishing skill in imitating both the form and the spirit of the originals.

His subsequent books are : *Ten Ancient Arabic Poems, with the Commentary of at-Tibrizī* (1901–1904), *The Dīwāns of ‘Abīd ibn al-Abras and ‘Āmir ibn at-Ṭufail* (1913), and *The Poems of ‘Amr son of Qamī’ah* (1919). The two last consist chiefly of pieces not printed before; the Arabic text is accompanied by an elaborate critical apparatus, an English rendering, and explanatory notes. But by far the most important of his works is his great edition of the Arabic Anthology entitled the *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, the preparation of which he announced in this Journal (April, 1904). The printing of the text, which occupies nearly 900 pages, began at Beyrout in 1910, but owing to the European War it was interrupted for several years, and the last pages were revised by him only a few weeks before his death. It is hoped that the first two volumes, containing the Introduction, the text, and the English translation, will appear very soon. A third volume, consisting of Indices, will not be ready for some time.

In his Arabic studies Sir Charles always took full account of the most recent discoveries in history, archæology, and linguistic science, and he was in frequent communication with some of the principal Orientalists of the Continent, especially with Professor Theodor Nöldeke, of Strasbourg, whom he described as “ Our Master ” in the dedication of his *‘Abīd and ‘Āmir* mentioned above. On the much-debated question of the authenticity of the verses ascribed to the pre-Islamic Arabic poets he adopted in the main a conservative position, that is to say, he held that the judgment of the great scholars of the second and third centuries after the Prophet was usually correct, though in some cases they may have been deceived by skilful forgeries, such as the celebrated poem ascribed to Ta’abbaṭa Sharrā in the *Ḥamāsah*, p. 382 seq.

Members of the Royal Asiatic Society do not need to be reminded of the prominent part which he took in its proceedings during the last twenty years of his life, and of the interesting papers which he published in this Journal (see October, 1903, January, April, July, 1912, January, April, 1914, April, 1918). But students of modern India may be glad to have their attention called to his article on the Mikirs (of Assam) in the eighth volume of the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (1915).

A. A. B.

HENRI LOUIS JOLY

AFTER a long and painful illness, bravely suffered, M. H. L. Joly died in Chelsea on August 26. He was buried in Brompton Cemetery.

For more than twenty years M. Joly has been one of the most distinguished members of the French community in London. Born at Chartres in 1876, he received a scientific education and entered on the profession of electrical engineer and chemist. It is surprising that in spite of the exacting nature of his calling, which he followed through life, he yet found time and energy to acquire such an extensive knowledge of matters appertaining to Japanese art. M. Joly possessed an instinctive love and just appreciation of this aspect of Oriental culture, and to these qualities were added thorough and honest scholarship—a rare combination that led to his recognition as a leading authority on the subject.

Legend in Japanese Art is too well known to need comment ; but perhaps his most important work was in connexion with sword furniture. His technical knowledge of metals and craftsmanship placed him in a position of peculiar authority, and it is a sad loss to the world that his untimely death has cut short the completion of a *magnum opus* on the subject. It is to be hoped that someone may be found to edit and