

## OBITUARY NOTICES

### Herbert Allen Giles

8 DECEMBER, 1845—13 FEBRUARY, 1935.

“Now Dr. Giles is the fanatical type and therefore he has made more progress than you in Chinese,” wrote a candid Chinese critic to a distinguished British friend—“But his fanaticism, always furiously taking sides no matter right or wrong, makes him a person”—but there is no need to finish the sentence. We have the two memorable facts, “he made more progress in Chinese,” and he was “always furiously taking sides”. He was, indeed, a ruthless controversialist. But those who knew him personally will rather remember his easy brilliant talk, the sense of leisure with hard work which pervaded his punctual, ordered home, and the great courtesy and kindness and generous hospitality with which they were always received. Nor was he in Chinese, or even in religious, matters nearly so intractable, controversial, or difficult to persuade as has sometimes been supposed.

“He made more progress in Chinese.” After twenty-six years in China, and four at Aberdeen, he spent the remaining thirty-seven years of his life as Professor of Chinese at Cambridge (actually resigning in December, 1932), and his interests for those nearly seventy years were for the most part centred in the Chinese language and literature, which he read himself, and then made known to others by the stream of his publications which flowed for just about a cycle. His first book, however, was not Chinese, but a double version of *Longinus on the Sublime*, which he made in Formosa, 1869, for his father’s “Keys to the Classics”. And a certain familiarity with the Greek and Latin classics followed him through life.

In Chinese he showed at first some interest in dialects, but later would almost boast that he knew nothing but

Mandarin and the language of books. His powers and inclinations led him on the whole away from antiquarian or linguistic research to a practical knowledge of the language, a practical delight in the literature, and an unerring instinct for what would interest the public and be practically useful to students. Yet one of his most elaborate efforts, *The Remains of Lao-tzŭ*, is not only his most famous controversial writing, but has established his claim to have been by intuition full thirty years in front of his times. And again, his *Chuang tzŭ; Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*, published at the same brilliant epoch, is no popular student's book, but will last, probably, as long as any of his work, and has attracted serious attention far outside the limits of sinology. Yet it is characteristic that the promised supplement with notes and Chinese characters never appeared. But where he was supreme was in his power to seize the opportunity of supplying felt wants which had been supplied inadequately, if at all, by his predecessors or contemporaries. To this we owe *Chinese without a Teacher*, *A Glossary of Reference*, *The San Tzŭ Ching* (superseding Eitel and others), *The Chinese-English Dictionary* (based on and superseding Williams), *The Biographical Dictionary* (based on, but far exceeding, Mayers's *Manual*), while *Gems of Chinese Literature*, *Strange Stories*, and *Chinese Pictorial Art* were more purely pioneer adventures into the unknown. "But perhaps," writes one who knew him very intimately, and is well qualified to appreciate his work, "his chief title to fame was as a translator. Like all of us, of course, he made mistakes, but he had an almost uncanny intuition for the real meaning of difficult sentences, and a remarkable aptitude for rendering them into good and readable English." He had also a pleasant gift for writing English verse, which he used not only in the translation of Chinese verse, but also for frequent contributions to *The Times*, *The Observer*, and other papers.

The French Academy, the Chinese Government, Oxford, and Aberdeen, and the Royal Asiatic Society, all bestowed

their honours upon him ; but his time at Cambridge must have been rather a disappointment to him. He had few pupils, and from the University he received very little encouragement or recognition.

By his death the most prominent figure among British sinologists has been removed.

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A. C. MOULE.

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### **Eleanor Henrietta Hull**

Many members of the Society will have heard with regret of the death of Miss Eleanor Hull, which took place on 13th January, at her home in Wimbledon. An obituary notice in *The Times* of 14th January was followed on the 16th by an appreciation on the part of Dr. Flower, then Chairman of Council of the Irish Texts Society, whereof Miss Hull had been the foundress (1899) and was honorary secretary. Her enthusiastic and scholarly studies of old Irish literature and folk-lore constitute her chief work ; but during a comparatively short period (November, 1918, to July, 1920) she served the Royal Asiatic Society in the capacity of secretary, her keen interest in all matters, her understanding of literary questions and her frank and engaging personality rendering her generally acceptable.

The chief transactions in which she was occupied on behalf of the Society were the adjustments connected with the removal from Albemarle Street to the new house, and the absorption of the interests and personnel of the Society of Biblical Archæology. But she also participated enthusiastically in the arrangements for the numerous attended Session held jointly with the Société Asiatique de Paris, the American Oriental Society and the Scuola Orientale of the University of Rome in September, 1919. At the Second Session, held in Paris during the July of the following year, she was present on behalf of the Society. Her retirement from the secretaryship was for the sake of her own studies.