

## III. OBITUARY NOTICES.

*George Bertin*, for many years a member of this Society, who died in February last, was born in Paris about the year 1848. He was a son of Auguste Bertin, B.-ès-L.; *avocat* and journalist, and grandson of Jean Victor Bertin, the well-known landscape-painter, for whose pupils the *Prix de Rome* may be regarded as having been created. About the year 1856 George Bertin, then a boy, accompanied his parents to London, where, for some time, his family lived. He received a private education until he was old enough to return to Paris to continue his studies there, and he then attended the classes at the Collège de France, taking up the study of Assyrian, under Professor Oppert. He began his career as a journalist whilst in Paris, and continued it after finally settling in England in 1871, when he was naturalized. At this time, also, he continued his studies of Assyrian, often going to 'the British Museum, and regularly attending the meetings of the learned societies, for he was not only an Assyriologist, but also an Anthropologist. Mr. Bertin was very widely read in the domain of comparative philology and ethnography.

Among Mr. Bertin's contributions to his favourite study may be mentioned his *Suggestions on the Formation of the Semitic Tenses* (1882), *Notes on the Assyrian and Akkadian Pronouns* (1885), *The Origin and Development of the Cuneiform Syllabary* (1887), and *The pre-Akkadian Semites* (1887), all in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, to which, also, in 1886, he contributed a paper entitled *The Bushmen and their Language*—a paper which he had written in consequence of having studied the subject when writing a similar article for the *Grande Encyclopédie*, published by Lévy, to which work he contributed the articles referring to Africa generally. Other papers by Mr. Bertin are *The Races of the Babylonian Empire* (Anthropological Institute), *Akkadian Precepts for the Conduct of Man in his Private Life*, *The Assyrian Numerals*, *Notes on Assyrian Numerals*, *On the Character and Influence of the Accent in the Akkadian and Assyrian*

*Words, Notes on Babylonian Contract-Tablets*, etc., in the *Transactions and Proceedings* of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, together with many papers of a similar nature in several English and French periodicals, etc. One of his last works was his *Abridged Grammars of the Languages of the Cuneiform Inscriptions* (*Sumero-Akkadian, Assyro-Babylonian, Vannic, Medic, and Old Persian*) in Trübner's *Collection of Simplified Grammars*. His last article, *Babylonian Chronology and History*, will be published shortly by the Royal Historical Society. The total number of his papers, exclusive of those contributed to the *Grande Encyclopédie*, is about forty. He always spoke with great respect of his first teacher, Prof. Oppert, and with affectionate regard of Professor Sayce, who may be regarded as his teacher in England, though, to say the truth, he was mainly self-taught, having acquired an excellent knowledge of the languages of ancient Mesopotamia direct from the tablets and published inscriptions.

Mr. Bertin was, or had been, also a member of the Anthropological Institute, the Philological Society, the Society of Biblical Archaeology, the Royal Historical Society, and the Société Philologique of Paris. In addition to the papers which he contributed to these institutions, he also gave several series of lectures, at the British Museum and elsewhere, upon his favourite study of Assyriology.

A man of very decided views, he was most conscientious, very kind-hearted, and always ready to help inquirers from his own special fund of knowledge. Unfortunately, fate dealt out to him more than his proper share of the difficulties of this life, and this, added to the trying malady from which he was suffering, has deprived Assyriology of an enthusiastic student, who, had all gone well with him, would have made himself a still greater reputation in his own special branch of research.

T. G. P.

We have to record the death of the Earl of Powis, great-grandson and heir to the title of Lord Clive, the conqueror of Plassey in India. He joined the Society in 1861, and

was present at the Anniversary Meeting in 1890, and had always taken an interest in Oriental, and specially Indian, Literature and Archæology, without pretending in any way to be a scholar. He seemed to think that this was a suitable mode of expressing his continued interest in India, which had been the foundation of the greatness of his family.

R. N. C.

*Commendatore Gasparo Gorresio.*—We regret to be obliged to omit from the future lists of Honorary Members the name of Commendatore Gasparo Gorresio, the illustrious Professor of the Sanskrit Language at Turin: he was born in 1808, and died in May, 1891. To him has been accorded the special honour of making the first translation into a European language of the great Sanskrit Epic, the Rāmāyana, and of carrying both text and translation through the Press at Paris between the years 1843 and 1856. This monumental work will be of the greatest service when a serious beginning comes to be made in the critical study of that famous poem. On the completion of the work (the expense of printing it, I may mention, was defrayed by Victor Emanuel, King of Sardinia), he returned to Turin, and occupied the post of Librarian of the University. He always welcomed the visits of Sanskrit scholars, and it was a pleasure to hold converse with this grand old scholar, who was a pupil of Burnouf, and the Father of Sanskrit Philology at this epoch. He was named "Senatore di Regno," in recognition of his literary merits, and was one of the Associate Members of the French Academy.

R. N. C.

It is with great regret that we have to chronicle the death of one of our most distinguished members, Colonel Sir Oliver Beauchamp Coventry St. John, of the Royal Engineers. Though not remarkable as a book scholar, or Orientalist, in the stricter sense of the term, he was a proficient in "Persian Colloquial," and by no means backward as a grammarian or critical student of the beautiful language.

of Háfiz and S'adi. It may indeed be said of him that, wherever his lot was cast within the dominions of the Shah, his quick ear and keen apprehension of surroundings made him a tolerably safe referee in questions of local idiom and pronunciation; and the present writer can testify from personal knowledge that for the seven or eight years during which the deceased officer was connected with Persia, in respect of telegraph operations or survey, his appreciation of the native character was of the truest value.

The bare record of St. John's services gives speaking testimony to his ability and versatility. When in his twentieth year, or in December, 1856, he received his first appointment to the Bengal Engineers, his Lieutenant's Commission dating from the 21st August, 1858. After a quasi apprenticeship in the Public Works Department of Upper India, he volunteered, in 1863, for special employment in Persia, and was accepted as an Assistant to his brother officer, Patrick Stewart, who had been directed by the Indian Government to organize a line of telegraph which would connect India with the European system by cables in the Persian Gulf, and land wires, carried from the Cable Stations on one side viâ Asiatic Turkey, and on another viâ Persia. The latter line—though its successful issue was eventually found in a prolongation of the wires in Northern Persia towards Russia and Western Europe—was, in the first instance, intended as a mere alternative to a section of the Turkish telegraph. In 1867, St. John was despatched to Abyssinia, where he did good service during the war, for which he received the thanks of the Government of India, and returned to Persia in the following year. In 1871, he conducted a survey of the Perso-Baluch frontier, from Gwatar in the South, to Jalk and Dizak in the North, and for some months afterwards he was employed by the India Office at home in preparing maps of Persia and Baluchistan. He returned to India in 1875, after an absence of more than eleven years.

The duty for which he was now selected was Educational, and he became Principal of the Mayo College at Ajmir.

Continuing to hold this post for a considerable period, he was attached, in August, 1875, to Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission to Kabul, and was afterwards Chief Political Officer of the Kandahar Field Force, and Resident in Kandahar. In April, 1881, he officiated as Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan; in January, 1883, he was employed on special duty in Kashmir; in 1884, Acting Resident at Haidarabad; later in the year, Resident in Kashmir; in December, 1887, Agent to the Governor-General at Baroda; in January, 1889, Resident in Maisur, and Chief Commissioner in Coorg. From Maisur he was quite recently recalled to Baluchistan, to take up the vacated office of Political Agent, owing to Sir Robert Sandeman's departure.

Persia and the contiguous lands supplied undoubtedly the more fitting field for Colonel St. John's labours. When he was at Ajmîr, in 1875, a letter addressed to the present writer shows that his heart was still in the country he had left:

"India revisited," he wrote, "has few charms after a dozen years in more genial climes . . . Consequently you will not be surprised to learn that I not unfrequently wish myself back at Tehran." As to his then immediate work, he added: "I expect to commence operations about the 1st August, with eight Jodhpûr boys, the same number from Ajmîr, and ten or a dozen from Jaipur. Udaipur, the most aristocratic and conservative of the States—though a home is being built for the boys—won't send any as yet."

Nine years later he wrote from Kashmir: "This is the most charming of countries, and deserves all that has been said of it: but the appointment, save for the easy work, is almost the most disagreeable in India." He has much to say of the native administration (or mal-administration), but matters have now changed, and the state of affairs described may be considered obsolete. The following passage is, however, interesting: "It was a relief to get to Haidarabad, among decent followers of the Prophet. I got on famously with every one there, and I believe they were quite sorry to lose me. The fact is, that in most parts of India the

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