

Paris and London, and in 1883 the Congress International des Orientalistes presented him with a diploma for services rendered to Oriental literature.

Full of enterprize in early life, and of sympathetic intelligence in his declining years, he secured to himself firm and lasting friendships: he was highly appreciated for his services by his fellow citizens, and his death has left a gap which will not easily be filled.

R. N. C.

June 8, 1892.

IV. NOTES AND NEWS.

The Game of Wei Chi.—At a recent meeting at Shanghai of the China branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, M. Volpicelli read a paper on "The Game of Wei-chi," which, he said, was the great game of China. It is considered by the Chinese to be far superior to chess, and to be the special game of the literary class. Wei-chi possesses interesting features and requires great skill in playing. It has for us the merit of absolute novelty, because it differs essentially from all Western games. Unlike chess or draughts, the men are never taken, but remain where they are played. The game is not a series of skilful evolutions, but a successive occupation of points which, joined together, give a final winning position. Though the game is on a very extensive scale, the board containing 361 places and the men employed being nearly 200 aside, still it is very simple in principle, all the men having the same value and the same powers. To achieve the object of the game on such an extensive board requires great foresight and profound calculation. This object is to occupy as much space on the board as possible. He who at the end of the game commands most places has won. This can be carried out in two ways—by enclosing empty spaces on the board with a certain number of one's men, and by surrounding and capturing the enemy's men. The name wei-chi comes from wei, meaning "to surround." Though it is so easy to state

in general terms the object the player has in view, it requires great skill to effect it if the player is matched with a good adversary. While he is trying to surround the enemy's men his are being surrounded by the adversary's, and this often occurs in the same part of the board, so that the men get interlocked and the position of one additional man may turn the scale. As there is no piece of vital importance, like the King at chess, and as the object of the game is of a general arithmetical character—to secure most places—the places lost in one part of the board may be compensated by surrounding the enemy in another quarter; so that wei-chi, instead of concentrating the attention of the player in one spot, as in chess, on the King, diffuses it all over the board. Very nice calculation is always necessary, so that one may balance the losses here with the gains there. The game was first mentioned in Chinese writings about B.C. 625. It was probably derived from the Babylonian astronomers, who were at that time the teachers of the East. Chinese Emperors have been very fond of the game, though it subjects them to the necessity of forgetting their rank, and those who play with the Emperor sit in his presence. It is recorded of an Emperor of the fourth century that on one occasion he made a move irregularly. The courtier who was playing with him held the Monarch's finger, and the Emperor was not offended. This was thought important enough to be mentioned in history.

Khalsa College.—The Sikh community at Lahore has been celebrating the opening of the new College for the education of the Sikhs there.

Mr. Fleet.—We are glad to see that the University of Göttingen has granted to Mr. Fleet the Honorary Degree of *Philosophie Doctor* for his distinguished services to Indian epigraphy and other branches of historical study in India.

Captain Bower's Expedition.—This traveller, together with Dr. Thorold and the rest of the party, arrived safely in Shanghai on Tuesday, the 12th of March, having traversed Ladak and a portion of Tibet.

The Mythical Bird (Syena, Saena, Rok Garuḍa).—Mr. Casartelli, M.R.A.S., has sent to the library a copy of his brochure on the Vedic, Persian, Arabic, and later Indian forms of this legend. The little pamphlet is a very excellent guide to the literature of the subject, and contains a very ingenious and probably true explanation of the mysterious name Rukh, or Rokh, given to this gigantic bird in the Arabian Nights.

Jñāneṣvara.—At Alundi, about ten miles from Poona, an annual festival is held in honour of an old Mahratta scholar of this name, who is supposed to have lived at the end of the twelfth century, and to have completed his *Dnyāneśvari* (a commentary in old Mārāṭhī on the Bhagavad Gītā) in the Saka year 1212. He is also the author of the *Jñāneṣvarashṭaka* mentioned in Burnell's Catalogue.

Cremation of D. A. De Silva Batuwantudava Pandit.—A correspondent, Mr. Capper, of the *Ceylon Times*, has sent us the following interesting particulars as supplied to that paper:—

“Last Saturday morning there was a copious supply of white sand strewn from one corner to the other in Dam Street, which, according to Eastern custom, indicated an occurrence of a most dismal nature. It was the cremation day of Pandit Batuwantudava, an oriental scholar, whose equal can hardly be found in Ceylon. As the day wore on groups of sympathizers and friends were wending their way to his residence; and by 3 p.m., the appointed time for the removal of his remains, there was a large concourse of people assembled, not deterred by the inclemency of the weather which continued throughout the day. Precise to time, the hearse moved on in the following order of procession: First, there was a cart containing *pori* (roasted paddy), which was sprinkled all along the way as a mark of respect for the departed. Next followed a number of boys with banners and flags, succeeded by a dozen tomtom beaters, who played a sort of dead march. Then came the hearse with the pall-bearers, followed closely by the principal mourners, sons, and near relations of the

deceased, the numerous sympathizers and friends closing the procession.

“At the crematorium over 200 Buddhist priests of different sects awaited the approach of the hearse. There were the high priest Sumangala and his followers, Dharmarama and his followers, Suriyagoda priest representing the Malwatta Vihara, Mulleriyawa priest representing the Cotta sect, and also the priests of the Amarapura sect.

“After the coffin was removed and laid on the pyre by the relatives of the deceased, the usual offering of cloths (*pansakula*) was made by them to the priests. The time having come for the oration over the deceased, the high priest by right of office had to discharge this duty. He was, however, overpowered with grief at the sad bereavement he had sustained in the loss of one who was dear to him as a fellow student in early days, and as a fellow labourer in the literary field later in life. He could only speak a few words, deputing the work to priest Nanissara, his ablest pupil, who delivered a short and comprehensive speech, first dwelling on the unselfish, pure, and modest life led by the deceased, combined with abilities in the department of oriental languages rarely to be met with; next, the duty of relations and friends to honour such a man; and, lastly, what benefits they will derive therefrom. The discourse being over, the pyre was set fire to by the nephew (sister's son, Mr. F. S. Abeyratna) of the deceased, in accordance with ancient rites.

“Thus closes the last scene in the life of Pandit Baṭu-wantudava. That he has rendered eminent service for his country's good goes without question. A better knowledge of medicine has been disseminated among the native vedaralas by Sanskrit works being translated into the vernacular by the pandit; and his efforts in the direction of religious and metaphysical works have given an impetus to oriental studies among Buddhist priests and laymen, and have also opened the way to those interested in the study of Buddhism. His work in connection with the Mahāwansa, required by the Ceylon Government, should receive marked

recognition. A few pages of the *Tikā* (commentaries) was being revised by the pandit when he was cut off. One of his sons is treading in his footsteps, and with oriental studies he combines a knowledge of modern languages which was wanting in the pandit, and which placed him at a very great disadvantage with oriental scholars in Europe.—*Ceylon Times*.

Mohammedan Coins.—Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole has just finished his "Catalogue of the Coins of the Mogul Emperors of Hindustan in the British Museum," from the invasion of Baber in 1525 to the establishment of a British currency by the East India Company in 1835. It contains descriptions of over 1400 coins, chiefly gold and silver, 500 of which will be represented in the autotype plates illustrating the work. As the Museum possesses incomparably the finest collection in the world of this splendid coinage the volume will offer a special interest to Indian students and collectors. In his introduction, Mr. Lane-Poole deals with the various historical, geographical, and other problems suggested by the coinage, and with the difficulties of classification presented by the early imitative issues of the East India Company and the French *Compagnie des Indes*. This volume, the fourteenth, will complete the description of the entire collection of Mohammedan coins in the Museum, which has been in course of publication since 1835 and with which may be grouped the same author's analogous "Catalogue of the Arabic Glass Weights," 1891, and Mr. R. S. Poole's "Catalogue of Persian Coins."

Indian Numismatics.—Mr. Rodgers, Honorary Numismatist to the Government of India, has finished his "Catalogue of the Coins with Persian or Arabic Inscriptions in the Lahore Museum," and practically finished his "Catalogue of the Coins in the Calcutta Museum." His own immense collection has now been purchased by the Pañjāb Government, and he has nearly completed his catalogue of that. These catalogues will be of very great importance alike for the numismatics, and for the modern history of India, and we congratulate the distinguished author on the completion of his laborious task.

Indian Scholars.—We have been requested to publish the following correspondence :

63, *Elm Park Gardens, S.W.*,
27th May, 1892.

MY LORD,—I am one of the oldest students of the Languages of British India, and venture to address your Lordship on the subject of the necessity of extending some additional encouragement to the study of these languages, and of Indian Archæology.

The abolition of the Indian Army, and of a Covenanted Civil Service trained in a special college, has cut away the sources of the former supply of Oriental scholars. No civilian of the past generation would have had any scientific knowledge of languages if he had not been trained at the East India College of Haileybury.

The Civil and Military services do not now produce scholars ; no doubt for their special duties they are equally, or even more, efficient, but the steady flow of Oriental scholars has ceased. The Educational Department does not supply the void, and language is but a small fraction of that Department. Nor does the native community, with some rare and splendid exceptions, supply scholars who can hold their own in European circles.

This failure is becoming yearly more manifest at the triennial Congresses of Oriental Scholars held at the different capital cities of Europe, nearly all of which I have attended.

If any post falls vacant, requiring scholarship, in Great Britain, or the Colonies, or even in British India, a Continental scholar has to be sent for, which wounds the *amour propre* of the subjects of Her Majesty.

It occurs to the undersigned, who at the close of a long career dedicated to the best interests of British India, has no personal object to serve, to suggest that your lordship might, with advantage, extend to young scholars in Oriental Languages and Indian Archæology, the same encouragement of Imperial favour, as is properly extended to the great Engineer, or Soldier, or Judge, or Administrator ; some members of the very distinguished Civil and Military

Services might then be induced to strive to maintain the glories of the epoch which produced Sir W. Jones, Mr. Colebrook, and Dr. H. H. Wilson, and others of a later date. At present this branch of study is nearly entirely neglected.

The undersigned takes the liberty of illustrating his argument by two instances: Mr. Brian Hodgson, still living at the age of ninety, and the late Sir Henry Yule; the names of both these scholars is mentioned with respect and admiration in Continental circles. In their own country their services to literature have, in the first case been entirely unacknowledged, and in the latter, so tardily, that death accompanied the honour. It is true that they, and others of the older generation, have laboured *for the work's sake*, not for the chance of honour, and in that they have their full, *and to them sufficient*, reward; but the object of the State should be to encourage others, and it seems as if the younger generation is compelled now to enquire, what will pay best in the long run, and, as certainly Oriental study does not in that sense pay, it suffers, and the high repute of the British name suffers with it. It is an object of desire to secure to the British name an all round reputation in arts and arms, and in every branch of human science, especially in a branch so closely connected with the religion, customs, and culture, and welfare of the great Indian nation confided to our charge.

It is therefore, with the profoundest respect, that I suggest to your lordship, that year by year a certain number of honorary decorations be reserved to those who have distinguished themselves in the advance of Indian Languages, Literature, Archæology, and Culture, whether Europeans or Natives of Asia. Some men return to their home, illustrious as Soldiers, or Statesmen, or Judges, or Engineers; let it be possible that to some it should be permitted to be honoured as Scholars, and possibly the fruit of their labours will survive into the next generation, when the achievements of the other illustrious public servants will be forgotten. It may perhaps be argued that in this respect, viz., in the enduring of their reputation to future ages, they have their

reward, and that the Father of Buddhist research and the Author of the Life of Marco Paolo would gain no additional lustre from anything that the Secretary of State for India had it in his power to give, but perhaps the Secretary of State himself might derive honour from the fact that he honoured those who were deserving of honour; at any rate younger scholars would be encouraged. There are some who have not attained such honours, though worthy of them; there are others who would not care for them, if offered for their acceptance; but there are others who in youth or middle life, with still unexhausted powers, might be encouraged to labour on the prospect of the fruits of their labour being recognized, and in behalf of the young scholars now in India I venture to intrude on your lordship's patience.—I am, your lordship's obedient servant,

R. N. CUST.

*To the Right Honble.,
The Secretary of State for India,
India Office.*

Copy of Reply.

SIR,—I am directed by Lord Cross to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th instant, and to thank you for the suggestions contained in it as to the encouragement of Oriental Scholarship.

His Lordship desires me to say that your remarks will be borne in mind, and that a copy of your letter will be sent to the Viceroy for his information.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

A. W. WILLIAM WYNN.

India Office, June 10th, 1892.