

## III. OBITUARY NOTICE.

*Sir James Abbott, K.C.B.*

We have to record the death of this distinguished veteran, the last of that company of Soldiers, and Civilians, who built up to its present grandeur the Empire of British India. He was born in 1807, and in a short time would have completed ninety years. He took a conspicuous part in the first Afghan War: there are very few alive now who, like myself, have held converse with the great men of that period—Nott, Pollock, Richmond, Sale, Havelock, Broadfoot, all of whom crossed the Satlaj on that famous day in 1842, when Lord Ellenborough welcomed the returning troops. James Abbott, who has just died, had distinguished himself before that date, but he was not there.

James Abbott went to India at the age of sixteen in 1823: he was present at the siege of Bhurtpúr in 1825-6. He went to Herát in 1838, and thence in 1839 he started on a mission to attach the Khan of Khiva to the British cause: he passed through the then mysterious region of Merv, and was the first Englishman, who crossed the Oxus, and reached Khiva. Stoddart and Conolly were at that time prisoners in Bokhára, where they died. Abbott persuaded the Khan to entrust him with a mission to the Emperor of Russia to arrange for mutual restoration of captives. In March, 1840, he made his way to the Caspian Sea, and thence to Orenburg, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, was admitted to an interview with the Emperor, and gained his object.

On returning to India he was employed in Civil posts in Rajputána: when the Sikh War broke out in 1845 he was not with his brothers, and myself, in the great battles on the River Satlaj, but, after peace had been declared, he was employed to demark the frontier of Kashmir and the Hazaruh, and there he was when the Panjáb War broke out in 1848: there I visited him in 1850, and the name of Abbotabad records the Civil Station,

which he founded. He attached the people to him personally: that was the secret in those days of managing Districts in the Panjáb: "the iron hand in the velvet glove": there he remained until 1853, engaged in a work of pacification, with occasional raids across the River Indus into the Region of the Black Mountain, the Aornos of Alexander the Great.

Thirty years of service had left him still a Major: in 1867 he took leave of India with the rank of Major-General: honours had been dealt out charily to him: in 1873 he was made a C.B., and in 1894 a K.C.B.: we may justly apply to him the words of Metternich in 1814 with regard to Lord Castlereagh, the English Ambassador, who appeared at the Court of Vienna, in the midst of men covered with decorations, in simple costume with not one order: "moins décoré, plus distingué." The Roman Historian Tacitus would have composed some stinging sentences with regard to the man, who had done things worth recording, and written books worth reading, who had achieved great things, while others had carried off the honours: for in looking back through the Annals of British India from 1844 to 1867, amidst the galaxy of great men, Military and Civil, who passed before me over the stage (and with the exception of Sir James Outram, I came into contact with them all), no more knightly form fell under my eye than that of James Abbott, the "preux chevalier" who was ready to sacrifice his own life to save that of poor Afghan female slaves; who was not afraid to meet the cruel fate of Stoddart and Conolly, and made in his diary of that date the following entry after saving human lives: "Whatever now befalls me, death, captivity, or success, I shall bless God, that I have visited Khiva." Such men are required to complete the picture of the group of servants of the State who, since the great frontier campaign of 1845-6, have made India what it is.

I had been drawn to him before I met him in 1850, 46 years ago, by his writings, for he was a poet, an antiquarian, and a man of letters; not a mere uncultured sabreur, or an unlettered official. He contributed twenty papers to the Journal of our Mother-Society, the Bengal

Asiatic Society, on a variety of subjects, such as, the quality of a sword-blade, on fragments of Greek Sculpture in the Panjáb (in which subject he was the earliest in the field); he identified the Black Mountain of Mahaban with the Aornos of the Roman chronicler; and he revived in me an interest in my classic studies, which the duties of Peace and War had partially destroyed. As one of the earliest English officials in the Panjáb, I dwelt on the banks of the River Hýphasis, which we called the Beas, and the Sanskrit authors the Vipása. Recalling the story of Alexander the Great, as learned in the sixth form at Eton, I felt an interest to look for the twelve Altars, and the inscription "Ego, Alexander, huc perveni," the Latin translation of the Greek words; and with the help of James Abbott I subsequently traversed, in 1850, the scene of the Grecian King's greatest battle on the Hydaspes, now called the Jhelum, and I sailed down that River into the great River, the Acesines, now the Chenáb, and thence into the Indus; and I thought of the time when the echo of those dreary wastes rang to the Greek Trumpet, and the great son of Philip of Macedon forced his way into Regions then unknown to the Grecian world, and which remained unknown up to the time, when James Abbott first described them.

Oh! if those recreant Macedonian troops had, more than two thousand years ago, not mutinied on the borders of my first Panjáb District, Alexander would have crossed the Hýphasis or Beas, and the Hysúdrus or Satlaj, and worked his way to the banks of the Jamna, and, embarking there, would have sailed down into the Ganges, and would perhaps have come into contact with King Asóka, the inscriber on the Rocks of India of the great Edicts. Many matters still unsolved regarding the History of the Indian Alphabet and of the Indian Religion would have been solved; and the subject of this Memoir made the first contribution to the unfinished stories of Arrian and Quintus Curtius, answering questions, to which the Greeks and Romans failed to give any reply.

I subjoin a list of the more notable of his works, but by no means an exhaustive one.

*List of Publications.*

POETRY.

1. "The Thakoorine, a legend of Maundoo." Madden, London, 1841. Second Edition, Kegan Paul, London, 1893.
2. "Tales of the Forest." Madden, London, 1853.
3. "Legends and Ballads." Calcutta, 1854.
4. "Prometheus' Daughter." London, 1851.
5. "Allah uddeen." Smith and Elder, 1880.

PROSE.

6. Contributions to East India United Service Journal before the year 1830 :
  - A. "The Private Sentinel."
  - B. "Narrative of the Joudpore Countermarch."
  - C. "Narrative of a Journey from Mhow in Malwa to Agra."
  - D. "Journal of Lieut. C. Bannemore."
  - E. "Barrack Sketches."
7. "Narrative of a Journey from Meerut in North India to Khiva, Moscow, and St. Petersburg during the late Russian Invasion of Khiva, with some account of the Court of Khiva and Kingdom of Kharesm." Two vols. Allen, London, 1843. Second Edition, Smith, Elder, and Co., 1867. Third Edition, W. H. Allen, 1884.
8. Contributions to a Periodical (name not known) :
  - A. "On the Ballads and Legends of the Panjáb," with a Plate of Coins.
  - B. "On the Mirage of India."
9. Contributions to the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society, Calcutta :
  - A. "Some account of the Camps and Battlefield of Alexander the Great and Porus." 1849.

B. "On the Sites of Nikaia and Bouképhala."

C. "Gradus ad Aornon."

10. Contribution to the Agri Horticultural Society's Journal, vol. xi, part 2 :

"On the Undeveloped Resources of our Indian Empire."

ROBERT N. CUST,

October, 1896.

Hon. Sec. to R.A.S.

#### IV. NOTES AND NEWS.

*Caitanya*.—Under the title of Śrī Gaurāṅga Līlā Smaraṇa Mangala Stotray, the well-known Vaishṇava Śrī Kedāra-natha Bhakti-vinod, M.R.A.S., has published a poem in Sanskrit on the life and teachings of Caitanya. It is accompanied with a commentary, also in Sanskrit, in which the subject is further elucidated, and is preceded by an Introduction of 63 pages in English, in which the doctrines taught by Caitanya are set out in somewhat full detail; this position, more especially as against Śankara and the Advaita Vedantists, is explained at length. The little volume will add to our knowledge of this remarkable reformer, and we express our thanks to Bhakti-vinod for giving it us in English and Sanskrit, rather than in Bangālī, in which language it must necessarily have remained a closed book to European students of the religious life of India.

*Sinhalese and its Allied Dialects*.—In the "Sitzungs-berichte" of the Royal Bavarian Academy for 1896, vol. ii, Dr. Geiger has published a most interesting account of his too short sojourn in Ceylon, from December, 1895, to March, 1896. He first gives an account of the way in which he spent the time at his disposal, and then deals with the linguistic results of his journey. He hopes shortly to bring out these results in fuller form, and they are to include the following essays: (1) On the language of the