

reasoning of Peacock's Mr. Asterias, " Might it not be a mermaid ? It was possibly a mermaid. It was probably a mermaid. Nay, what else could it be but a mermaid ? It certainly was a mermaid " (a form of argument, the seduction of which the most eminent scholars have not always been able to resist). His first essay in interpreting the pre-Islamic history of Arabia, " The Background of Islam " (Alexandria, 1947), must be accounted a failure ; it is too full of fantastic and untenable hypotheses. But it was written under difficulties, in the war years when he had no access to books and was cut off from contacts with other scholars in the field. In recent years, he was fully aware of this, and had been hoping to produce a completely revised edition. And he has the merit of having (in his article " South Arabian Chronology ", *Le Muséon*, 1949) been the first to raise a voice against an unsound preconception vitiating the work of experts in this field : namely the idea that South Arabian kingship was to be visualized in terms of a continuous series of father-to-son successions like the better-established European monarchies.

Those who knew him will not forget his personality : a commanding one, sometimes almost overpowering, but always characterized by true humanism and abounding kindness. For two things above all his memory will be cherished : his abundant hospitality and his generous encouragement of younger men. He was never so happy as when acting the genial host, dispensing a truly Arabian hospitality to a gathering of friends. And of his encouragement of the young, I myself have been a beneficiary since, in 1937, he entrusted to me, unknown and untried as I was, the exciting task of editing the inscriptions gathered in his journey of the previous year.

Bi-abī tilkumu l-'izāmu 'izāman wa-saqathā l-samā'u šawba l-ghamāmi.

A. F. L. BEESTON.

THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND

The Rt. Hon. Sir Lawrence John Lumley Dundas, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. was born on 11th June, 1876. He visited Ceylon, Persia, Burma, Japan and China and travelled in Central Asia and Siberia. From 1916 to 1922 he was Governor of Bengal and in spite of Indian mistrust of a disciple of Curzon won the respect and affection of the people during a most difficult period. Though he

was disappointed at not being selected as Viceroy, from 1935 till 1940 he was a singularly well-equipped Secretary of State for India.

As young Lord Ronaldshay he wrote *Sport and Politics under an Eastern Sky* (1902), *On the Outskirts of Empire in Asia* (1904), *A Wandering Student in the Far East* (1908) and *An Eastern Miscellany* (1911). After returning from Bengal in 1922 he wrote *Lands of the Thunderbolt, Sikhism, Chumbi and Bhutan; India: a Bird's Eye View*, and *The Heart of Aryavarta*. In 1928 he published a life of Lord Curzon and in 1957 his own memoirs. His scholarship was recognized by his election as a Fellow of the British Academy in 1929. From 1928 until 1931 he was at once a Steward of the Jockey Club and a diligent President of this Society. Few men can have lived so full and useful a life.