

father in 1902. In 1894 he was made a companion of the Indian Empire, and in 1916 a Companion of the Bath. In 1922 he was made Honorary Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society, and he was an Honorary Fellow of his old college, Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was also a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Society of Antiquaries.

R. E. E.

---

### Sir Charles Eliot.

The Right Hon. Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe Eliot G.C.M.G., C.B., M.A., Hon.D.Litt.(Oxon), Hon.LL.D.(Edin.), Hon.D.C.L.(Durham), British Ambassador at Tokio from 1919 to 1926, died on board the Japanese mail-steamer *Hakone Maru* on 17th March last, while on his homeward voyage from Japan to England.

To the majority of members of the Royal Asiatic Society, Sir Charles Eliot's name is best known as that of a learned and accomplished Orientalist, to whom they are indebted for one of the best books ever published in English on Hinduism and Buddhism; but he was greatly distinguished in other spheres. Besides being one of the best linguists and classical scholars of his time he served his country with conspicuous success in administrative and diplomatic capacities; and he found time for some fruitful researches into certain branches of marine biology.

Eliot was born in 1862. Going up to Oxford from Cheltenham College he took a scholarship at Balliol and was soon recognized by his seniors and contemporaries as one of the most outstanding men of his academic generation. Between 1881 and 1886 he gained the Hertford, Ireland, Craven, and Derby scholarships, the Syriac Prize, and the Boden scholarship in Sanskrit. His study of Sanskrit, which he originally regarded as subsidiary to philological studies, soon awakened in him a permanent interest in Oriental

religion and philosophy. On taking his degree he became a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and in 1923 received the honorary fellowship which he held up to the time of his death. He remained in touch with Oxford throughout his life, and All Souls is one of the colleges in which he was a familiar figure and where he will be greatly missed.

Entering the diplomatic service in 1886 he served in St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Morocco, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Washington. From 1901 to 1904 he held the post of High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of the British East African Protectorate. After his resignation from that post, which was the result (entirely honourable to Eliot) of a difference of opinion on an important matter of public policy between himself and the home government, he returned to England and soon afterwards became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield. In 1909 he was a member of the Royal Commission on Electoral Systems. In 1912 he became first Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the newly-founded University of Hong-Kong, and this appointment he held till 1918, when he re-entered the service of the Crown and became British High Commissioner in Siberia during the period of Kolchak's struggle against Soviet Russia.

In the following year he was appointed British Ambassador at Tokio and became a Privy Councillor. This was his last public appointment, and when he retired seven years later he made no secret of the fact that he intended to devote the next few years—which proved to be the closing years of his life—to researches into the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Japan.

The first of Eliot's publications appears to have been a *Finnish Grammar*, produced in 1890. It was followed by *Turkey in Europe* (1900), *The East African Protectorate* (1905), *Letters from the Far East* (1907), and *Hinduism and Buddhism* (1921). He was the author, as already indicated, of sundry papers on marine biology, and contributed valuable articles to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th edition) on the History

of Asia, on Esthonia, the Hungarian language, the Huns, Kashgar, the Khazars, the Tartars, and the Turks.

Eliot could be brilliant and vivacious in conversation when he found himself in congenial company, but he did not suffer fools gladly. He was wholly free from race-prejudice, and had a genuine liking for the many Asiatic peoples with whom his interests or duties brought him into contact. If the Japanese came first in his estimation and affections, the Chinese were not far behind; and for Indian achievements in philosophic and religious speculation and in poetry he had warm appreciation. He was a loyal friend and a charming correspondent.

None of the many honours conferred upon him by his own Government and by various British Universities was more highly prized by him than that of membership of the Japanese Imperial Academy, which he received in 1926. This honour had up to that time been reserved for Japanese, and its bestowal upon him is an indication of the admiration and respect which his scholarly attainments obtained for him in Japan.

During his residence in Hong-Kong and Japan Eliot paid several visits to China, and the writer of this Notice had the pleasure of entertaining him in 1914 at Wei-hai-wei and ten years later at the Summer Palace, near Peking. He met him again in 1926, in London, shortly after his retirement from the diplomatic service; and saw him for the last time on 9th October, 1930. Eliot was then living at the Nara Hotel, in Japan, where for some time he had been leading a very quiet and retired life, putting the final touches to his book on Japanese Buddhism. Nara is situated in a district which for the student of Buddhism in its Japanese varieties possesses unique attractions; and it will not be surprising if when Eliot's work is published we find that something of the charm and tranquillity of Nara and its wonderful temples has passed into the pages of his book. It is pleasant to know that the closing months and years of

his life were spent amid surroundings which to him must have been ideally congenial and a constant source of inspiration. He informed the present writer, in the course of a last conversation, that he intended to leave for England in the ensuing spring, bringing with him his completed manuscript. He duly left for England when the time came, but never reached it. His book, fortunately, is in the hands of his executors, and its publication, it is reasonable to hope, will not be long delayed.

Eliot was a sick man when the *Hakone Maru* passed through Hong-Kong. He was unable to go ashore, but he was visited on board by several of those who had been his friends and colleagues during his period of office at the University. A fitting tribute of respect was paid to his memory there when the news of his death reached the Colony a few days later. The members of the University Court and Senate and the resident graduates and undergraduates stood in silence in the Great Hall while Sir William Hornell moved a resolution deploring the loss of the distinguished scholar, diplomat, and administrator who had been the first of his predecessors in the office of Vice-Chancellor.

It happened that there was no Christian priest on board the *Hakone Maru* when Eliot died, and the Japanese captain, who, as the Singapore correspondent of *The Times* observed, knew something of Eliot's "intense interest in Buddhism", decided that his body should be committed to the sea in accordance with the Buddhist rites ordinarily observed on such occasions. "With this simple and impressive ceremony a great scholar and noted diplomatist was buried by a people whom he knew and loved."

REGINALD F. JOHNSTON.

---