

## OBITUARY NOTICES.

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### MAJOR-GENERAL FORLONG, M.R.A.S.

THE death of Major-General Forlong, at his home in Edinburgh, on March 29th, 1904, was the peaceful close of a strenuous, happy, and successful life, both as a man of action and as a scholar. He was the third son of the late William Forlong, of Erines. His mother was the eldest daughter of Lieut.-General Gordon Cumming Skene, of Parkhill, Pitlurg, and Dyce, in Aberdeenshire. He was born at Springhall on November 6th, 1824. A short autobiographical note, prepared in April, 1889, gives the main facts of his career as follows:—

“James George Roche Forlong, H.B.M. Army, born Lanarkshire, Scotland, November, 1824. Educated as an Engineer in England and Scotland; joined the Indian Army 1843; fought in the South Mahrāta campaign, Bombay Presidency, 1845-6. Appointed to the Engineering Staff of the Army, Madras Presidency, 1847; and in 1852 to the Engineer Staff of the “Army of Ava,” serving throughout the second Burmese war. On the annexation of the country, became the head of the Survey Road and Canal Branches, P.W.D. In 1858-9 travelled extensively throughout Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, etc. End of 1859 appointed a Special Commissioner, and Inspector-General of Prisons, to enquire into the employment of convicts on public works, and to establish large prisons on Andaman Islands and adjacent coasts of Burmah. In 1861-2 appointed Superintending Engineer, Presidency Circle, Calcutta. In 1863 Superintending Engineer, Upper Bengal, Darjeeling, etc. In 1864-7 the same in North-West Provinces and Native States. In 1868-71 the same, and Secretary to the Government of Rājputāna, embracing all the

great Native States of Western India. In 1872-6 appointed Secretary and Chief Engineer to the Government of Oudh. In 1877 retired, after active service of 33 years, during which he frequently received the thanks of the Indian and Home Governments. Has long been a writer in many periodicals of the East and West—always on matters concerning religions, archæology, and philology. A great student of Eastern rites, symbols, customs, and languages, of which he has studied seven—Aryan, Turanian, and Semitic, being able to converse freely in four. Was an active Evangelical in his youth, preaching to the natives in their own tongue. Shortly after retiring from active service he brought out a large work, in two beautifully illustrated quarto volumes, called ‘Rivers of Life,’ the matter of which he had been collecting and considering for many years in the East. It is to show the evolution of all religions from their radical objective bases up to the present spiritualised developments; and this is much helped by a large and elaborate chart of the quasi ‘rivers,’ showing, by streams of colours, the modes of thought, with accompanying symbols and rites, chronologically and historically, from 10,000 B.C. to the present time.”

In this very modest account of his life there is no mention of the arduous character of some of his duties, which, however, are not forgotten by Indian historians. He received the Burmese medal and clasp in 1852; and immediately afterwards distinguished himself by a work which showed, not only his energy and ability, but also the influence he could exert over Orientals, as the following extracts will serve to show:—

“No sooner had Pegu become a British province than Lord Dalhousie saw the necessity of connecting it with Bengal by a military road, thus to obviate the objections of the Sepoys to the sea. A road was constructed from Dacca to Arracan, but not without a great sacrifice of life and money. To pass from Arracan to Pegu it was necessary to cross the Yoma range, through the Toungoo pass, which presented such formidable obstacles to the engineer that the construction of the road appeared, at first, an impracticable undertaking. The mountains were lofty; the forest was dense; water was scarce, and labour still more so; and the climate was so pestiferous as to reduce the working season to five months in the year. It was entrusted to Lieut. Forlong, who

succeeded in collecting, embodying, and training a brigade of Burmese labourers; and by his untiring zeal and energy he completed the enterprize in two years."—Marshman's "History of India," vol. iii, p. 436.

The appointment was due to the Governor-General himself, as appears from his biography.

"Again Phayre proposes the name of an engineer for the work of constructing the important road over the mountains from Arakan to the Irrawady. But the Governor-General prefers to entrust this work to another officer, and the Commissioner at once agrees that Forlong is the best selection, explaining that he had not been aware that his services were available."—Warner's "Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie," vol. ii, p. 12.

The following is from p. 15 of the same work :—

"The invincible objection of some native regiments to a passage by sea induced the Governor-General to connect Pegu, by land, with Bengal. For this purpose he at once ordered the construction of a road from Dacca to Akyab, passing through a most pestilent tract and a number of river estuaries. For the transit of the rivers iron ferry-boats were provided, and from Akyab to Ramree an inland creek was made use of. Thence, by the energy of Lieutenant Forlong, a road was carried 157 miles over the Arakan mountains, by the Toungoo pass to Prome, and continued to Meadag, along the eastern bank of the Irrawady. The highest elevation crossed was 3,000 feet, and the gradient nowhere exceeded 3 feet in an hundred. The density of the forest, through which 150 elephants had with immense difficulty forced a way in the expedition of 1852, and the extreme unhealthiness of the climate, which limited the working season to five months in the year, were only one part of the obstacles encountered. Water was scarce, and there were no labourers to be obtained except the Burmese, impatient of steady toil, and afraid to commit themselves to our service. Shelter and water had to be supplied along the route; but, although the road was not actually commenced until December, 1853, the Arakan battalion was able to march along it, from Prome to the sea, with all its baggage and followers, in the Spring of 1856."

The estimation in which General Forlong was held, on account of his high personal character, is best illustrated

perhaps by the words of the Rev. Dr. Glasse, of Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh, on the occasion of the funeral, by cremation, at the Western Necropolis, Glasgow, on 1st April, 1904:—

“He had not only a successful but a brilliant career in his profession, and surrendered it at a comparatively early age to devote himself to the service of truth. The last years of his long life were spent in earnest labour in connection with religious studies, and the result was given to the world in his ‘Rivers of Life.’ It is a monument of industry. He spared no effort or expense on it. The literature of the world was laid under contribution for arguments and illustrations. It was difficult to work such a huge mass of diversified knowledge into graceful form; but it is a wonderful example of persevering research and faithful exposition. There was no doubt as to the reality of the main contention. ‘Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions’ is more mature; and indicates, not only multifarious reading, but comprehensive thinking. It is a valuable quarry to the student, and might furnish suggestions, as well as information, for many a popular treatise on similar subjects. There may be controversy over his writings; but there will be only one opinion among his friends and acquaintances as to the excellence of his personal qualities. He was one of the best of men. I shall ever remember him as courteous and honourable, kindly and unaffected, intensely earnest and yet eminently reasonable. He was singularly pleasant in discussion. So far from being aggressive, he was always willing, with reference even to his strongest positions, to consider criticism; and by his deferential bearing did much to commend his ideas. One felt that he was willing to sacrifice himself. Difference of opinion thus only revealed his virtues and deepened our respect. He appeared to advantage in every department of life, whether as a citizen, a soldier, or a thinker.”

In 1863 General Forlong married the eldest daughter of Major Montague Perreau, of his old regiment (1st Madras N.I.), and enjoyed forty years of perfect domestic happiness, through the care of a devoted wife of intellectually congenial character.

From the preceding statements it will be seen that General Forlong, when he undertook to present to students a work on Asiatic religions and superstitions, possessed

unusual qualifications for such a task. He was not merely a bookworm, writing the "History of Human Error." He spoke of countries and customs as to which he had already gained intimate personal knowledge before he began to write. Not only in Burmah or in India did he study such questions on the spot, by aid of constant intercourse with the Asiatic custodians of traditions, but he knew also the homes of other faiths, in Palestine, Greece, and Italy. He held long talks with Gurus in Burmese forests, and he visited the remote west of Ireland to study on the ground its prehistoric monuments. In his library were to be found, not only ancient works, like those of Bryant and Monfaucon on mythology, but also the latest dictionaries and books of reference, the Transactions of all the leading learned societies, and such works as the long series of "Sacred Books of the East." He also followed with the keenest interest the progress of exploration and research, in Asia especially. His shelves contained all the leading works of travellers in the East. He was familiar with questions of Assyriology and Egyptology; and one of his latest studies was devoted to the great discovery of the Laws of Hammurabi, found at Susa. But his strength lay especially in his knowledge of Indian religions, not only those of Vedas, Puranas, and Sutras, but especially the folklore of the peasant, and the early superstitions often only orally preserved, which cannot be studied save by those who are able to gain the confidence of Asiatics. He read Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, besides speaking the languages most useful in India; and he understood the philosophy of Greece, as well as that of Buddhists, Confucians, and Taoists.

But it was by the mild and compassionate figure of the Buddha that he was chiefly attracted, in a country where so many warring faiths are to be studied—"Right thought; Right words; Right deeds": the narrow path of the Bikshu. From these he learned that there are fair humanities and deep truths to be recognised beyond the pale of Christianity. It was not his object to attack the Bible; and no man ever fulfilled the duties which Christians

confess more fully or more constantly than did General Forlong. When he first wrote, the things he said were often strange to British thought at home, though familiar to those who had been in the East. He was a pioneer in 1880, and he said many things very unacceptable to the general public. To-day, when we consider the writings of Dr. Cheyne, or of Mr. Frazer in his "Golden Bough," we see that, not only German antiquaries, but scholars in our own Universities have come round, in many respects, to the views which had been expressed in General Forlong's book some twenty years before.

These views were published in two large works; and the author has left ready for publication a third work, representing twenty-five years of research, which is to be shortly published, and which contains even more valuable materials than those to be found in his "Rivers of Life"<sup>1</sup> and "Short Studies."<sup>2</sup>

A few points in which General Forlong's studies were most original and valuable may finally be noted. India is the home of the curious phallic symbolism, as to which so much has been written that is based only on theory. General Forlong had studied it as it exists still, and the symbolism was fully explained to him by Brahmins. This enabled him to treat with real knowledge questions of comparison with the symbolism of earlier ages, in Babylonia, Greece, Italy, and among rude tribes in Africa, Polynesia, America, and Europe. He did not, as others have done, attribute to a phallic origin every custom and myth. He recognised other elements in early superstition, such as the worship of trees, of sun and planets, of ghosts, of water and fire. The rites and beliefs of the past he was able to understand by the living beliefs of the present, as they are found especially in Asia.

<sup>1</sup> "Rivers of Life: or the Faiths of Mankind in all Lands; showing the Evolution of Faiths, from the rudest symbolisms to the latest spiritual developments." By Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, F.R.G.S., F.R.S.E., M.A.I., A.I.C.E., F.R.H.S., F.R.A.S., etc. Quaritch, 1883. 2 vols. 4to. Illustrated.

<sup>2</sup> "Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions: embracing all the Religions of Asia." By the same. Quaritch, 1897. 1 vol. Large 8vo.

Another point of importance was his development of the idea of early Turanian or Mongolic influence on the ancient world. He shows how the civilisation of Aryan and Semitic races was based on that of the Turanians, such as the Akkadians of Chaldea. He maintained both that the Indian Aryans entered the Punjab at a late period of history (about 800 B.C.), and also that they found a large Turanian population and a highly developed Turanian civilisation of primitive character, by which in time they were much influenced. These views, now very commonly accepted, were very new when first he put them forward in print.

To the present writer he was a dear and most kind friend, and an instructor in many Asiatic researches. To scholars he was a benefactor who will be sorely missed. He had the time, the money, the intellect, and the inclination to undertake work otherwise impossible of execution. He will live through his works in the memory of many future leaders of thought; but we shall hardly see his like again.

C. R. CONDER.

(إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ)

SHAYKH HASAN TAWFIQ.

DIED FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 1904, AGED ABOUT 40.

THE death of Shaykh Hasan Tawfiq at Cambridge on the night of Friday, June 3, after a brief illness lasting only three hours, has caused, to all who knew him well enough to appreciate his gentle, amiable, and modest character, and his devotion to learning and a high ideal of the scholar's life and duty, the deepest sorrow; while his loss to his country and ours, and especially to the University of Cambridge, is one which cannot be made good.

Originally a student at the great University of al-Azhar, founded at Cairo nearly a thousand years ago by Jawhar