

OBITUARY NOTICE

Sir Charles Bell, K.C.I.E., C.M.G., F.R.G.S.

By the death of Sir Charles Alfred Bell we have lost a leading scholar of current Tibetan. His *Grammar* and his *Dictionary of Colloquial Tibetan* (1905) are standard works, and in his three works, *Tibet Past and Present* (1924), *The People of Tibet* (1928), and *The Religion of Tibet* (1931), he has given the most complete and authentic account of that country, its history, its people, and its religion, both from original Tibetan sources and from his own intimate knowledge of the country.

Bell was the son of an Indian civilian. He was educated at Winchester, where he was a scholar, and at New College, Oxford. He entered the Indian Civil Service in Bengal in 1891, and in 1904 was appointed Assistant Political Officer in Sikkim, being promoted its Political Officer in 1908. He conducted a Political Mission to Bhutan in 1910, concluding a Treaty by which its foreign relations were placed under the British Government. He was employed at the Tibet Conference, in India, between Great Britain, China, and Tibet in 1913. He retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1919, but was recalled to conduct a Diplomatic Mission to Lhasa in 1920, remaining there for eleven months. Afterwards he travelled in Tibet, Mongolia, and Siberia. In 1937 he received the Lawrence Memorial Medal of the Royal Central Asian Society.

Sir Charles Bell began his study of Tibetan in 1900, when he was Joint Magistrate at Darjeeling, and he compiled his *Grammar and Dictionary of Colloquial Tibetan* when he was Sub-Divisional Officer of Kalimpong in that District, both under the present writer. Bell formed an intimate friendship with the late Dalai Lama while the latter was living in Darjeeling in 1910 to 1912, when he had to escape from Tibet, an intimacy continued during the eleven months Bell was in Lhasa; his *Tibet Past and Present* is dedicated by permission to the late Dalai Lama "in memory of a long friendship". This intimacy gave Sir Charles Bell a unique position in his intercourse with all classes of Tibetan society, and greatly extended and strengthened the friendship started by Sir Francis Younghusband's Mission, and it was mainly instrumental in smoothing the way for the subsequent Missions to Lhasa.

E. H. C. WALSH.