

The Society has to deplore the death of its Honorary Member, Geheimrat Bastian, who died in Port of Spain on February 3rd, 1905. He died in full harness, being then on his eighth journey of exploration, which had brought him to the West Indies. He had reached Trinidad in good health; there he complained of fatigue, an unusual thing with him, and within six days he died. A lonely wanderer, he was buried in Port of Spain; following him to the grave was only his writer, and it apparently took three weeks before the news reached Europe.

He died at the ripe age of 79 being born in Bremen on the 26th June, 1826. Whilst at the University he studied law, natural science and medicine, and in the year 1849 during his last term at the University of Würzburg he heard the lectures of Professor Virchow, with whom he was instrumental in later years in founding with others the Anthropological Society of Berlin, the youngest perhaps but not the least of the societies devoted to the study of man. After having passed his examination in medicine, he undertook in 1850 his first voyage of exploration, which brought him to Australia. He made the voyage as ship's-surgeon and eight years were occupied by it. The work he published on this voyage showed the whole tendency of his studies, although it was only in 1860 that his great work "Der Mensch in der Geschichte" appeared. In 1861 and 1862 he undertook his second great voyage, the results of which he published under the title of "Die Völker des östlichen Asiens." It is this work which particularly interests us. A keen and sympathetic observer he described what he saw in these countries and especially in Siam; through the help and assistance of King Mongkut and of the learned Buddhist priests, and of the foreign Missionaries he got a deep insight into folklore, history and religion. This book is a mine of wealth; it ought to have been translated at the time of its appearance, as many often repeated errors have already been refuted in it. He had no special purpose to serve, when he came to Siam; he came there with an unbiased mind and his book is not disfigured by any tendency. Whilst he was in Siam he took an interest in grammar and history, and the studies he published on Burmese and Siamese, on the tones in Siamese, his translation of Siamese inscriptions, his remarks on

Buddhism and on folklore will all have a permanent value. Many explanations are given on obscure points and many fruitful hypotheses are advanced in these pages.

In spite of numerous voyages, in spite of the many countries he saw, of the people whose mind he investigated; he always kept up his interest in Siam and in Buddhism.

Eight long voyages brought him to nearly all parts of the earth; in all these voyages his great aim was to investigate the "soul of the people," the Völkeridee as he called it.

Later years will and can only show how fruitful the seed is he has sown.

Many were the pupils whom he influenced and who looked upon him as their teacher. He, however, did not form a "school"; he left everyone to pursue his studies in his own way, and if anything could show the wide influence he exercised, it was the varied contents of the "Festschrift" which his numerous friends and pupils dedicated to him on his seventieth birthday, which found him on a journey in the Malay Archipelago.

Between 1880 and 1889 he was in Berlin, and when in 1886 the Museum für Völkerkunde was opened, it was only just that he should become its first Director. Such was the influence he exerted, that willingly or unwillingly travellers brought him numerous gifts, as they were sure to find a worthy place in the Institute under his care.

It does not belong to us to give a judgment on the style of his writings. Certainly they are not easy reading; the wealth of material is too great in them; perhaps they were too quickly written; but they show an uncommonly wide range of learning. There is nothing trivial in any of them, and they are fruitful, of the highest thought on whatever subject they may treat.

It was an honour to our Society when he accepted the post of an Honorary Member, and his memory will

always be cherished by us; and he may certainly be considered as one of those who exerted their influence in the foundation of the Society. When he received the letter advising him of his appointment, he wrote from Montego Bay, July 30th, 1904.

“The Honour conferred on me by the Siam Society impresses me the more satisfactorily, as coming from a country dear to my memory, in regard to the manifold information, I have been favoured with during a temporary sojourn in the interest of ethnological studies.”

O. F.