

He has left a large circle of private friends to mourn the loss of him, in Great Britain as well as in his native land. And his labours and attainments did not fail to meet with public as well as private appreciation. The Academies of Berlin, Munich, and Göttingen, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the American Oriental Society, enrolled him amongst their Corresponding and Honorary Members. The Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen conferred on him the Honorary Degree of LL.D., and the University of Oxford that of D.Litt. From his own Sovereign he received the title of Geheimer Regierungsrat. And by Her Majesty Queen Victoria he was invested in 1886 with the distinction of a Companion of the Indian Empire.

J. F. FLEET.

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J. FRANCIS HEWITT.

MR. HEWITT, a member of our Society for twenty years, and at one time on the Council, died on the 14th March last at Holton Cottage, Wheatley, in Oxfordshire. He had an attack of influenza, and this being followed by pneumonia, he passed away, after a short illness, and in the 72nd year of his age. Some years before this he had a disastrous accident when cycling which resulted in the loss of a foot. He was the son of a clergyman, the Hon. J. P. Hewitt, and was born in Ireland, but was educated at Westminster and Christ Church. He had lived much in Warwickshire, near Coventry, and I remember his telling me nearly fifty years ago, when there were still doubts about the authorship of the "Scenes of Clerical Life" and of "Adam Bede," that he had recognised the house described in Mr. Gilfil's "Love Story," and had often played cricket with the original of the "Vicar of Shepperton." Mr. Hewitt entered, by

competition, the Indian Civil Service, and when I first knew him was stationed at Krishnagar and was living with the Magistrate, Sir William Herschel. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the two men, both of whom were gifted with great activity of mind and body. In 1863 Hewitt went to Chota Nagpore as Deputy Commissioner, and soon became deeply interested in the wild tribes of that country. That excellent officer, Colonel Dalton, whom Hewitt justly calls the pioneer of aboriginal ethnology in Bengal, had continued in Chota Nagpore the researches which he had made in Assam, and Hewitt became fired by his example. He eventually became Commissioner of Chota Nagpore, and during his long stay in the province he accumulated a store of information about the manners and customs of the Mundas, the Gonds, and other aboriginal tribes. After his retirement he set himself to reduce into writing his observations and speculations on Indian folklore and prehistoric man, and published several volumes on those subjects. "The Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times" appeared in two volumes in 1894 and 1895; "The History and Chronology of the Myth-making Age" in 1901; and "Primitive Traditional History," in two volumes, in 1907. He also contributed articles on his favourite subject to our Journal and to the *Westminster Review*.

It is quite beyond my power to judge of the value of his researches. Folklore is a subject which has come up since my day, and to one who is a book-man, or *ahl-kitāb*, as the saying is, folklore is about as mysterious as the Röntgen rays or wireless telegraphy. Certainly, some of Hewitt's etymologies seem strange and doubtful. One hardly likes to hear that the many-wiled Ulysses—*adversis rerum immersabilis undis*—was a wandering sun-god, and his Penelope the weaver of the web of Time, or that the silver-footed Thetis was the mud

goddess of the southern cauldron of life. Even Cinderella and Nala and Damayanti are not spared. Nala becomes a god of rain, though in the tale he is recognised as a man by his casting a shadow, and Damayanti typifies the earth's being gradually brought under cultivation. To read such things gives a shock such as one experienced when he had to give up Diana and accept in her stead a waterless and volcanic waste. But this abandonment was required by truth, and it may be that we shall also have to abandon other pleasant tales. They may have to pass away like the legends of King Arthur and William Tell.

But whatever scholars may think of Hewitt's etymologies and theories, no one can refuse admiration for his enthusiasm and for his hard work. He spared neither time nor expense in expounding his views, and as he had the great advantage of not being merely a closet-student, we find here and there in his books interesting observations which could only be made by one who had lived among aboriginal tribes. In these respects he reminds us of James Tod, who, along with much false history and many erroneous dates, has given us a vivid picture of Rajasthan. As instances of Hewitt's observations I may refer to the statement at p. 50 of the "Ruling Races," that in Chuttisgurh he learned to discriminate about forty kinds of rice, and could distinguish them while growing, and to that at p. 52, where he tells us that neither the Munda nor the Hokal tribe drink milk. Apparently, this is a characteristic of many of the Indian hill-tribes, for I remember being told by Colonel Maculloch, of Manipur, that some of the Nagas regarded milk with abhorrence, as being the excrement of the animal. See also his account of the Akra or village dancing-ground at p. 233 and elsewhere, and his note on musical instruments at p. 205. He speaks of the word Akra in a note to p. 52 as being

a Munda word, but if so it also occurs in Hindustani under the form Akhāra, and is used to mean a wrestling-ground, and also a troop of dancers.

In private life Mr. Hewitt was a man of most amiable character, and he had many friends. Long ago, when he was yet a young man, his kindness to a brother-civilian who died young was commemorated in a memoir of the latter in a little book entitled "Crushed Hopes Crowned in Death." He has left a widow, two sons, and two daughters.

His old friend Sir William Herschel has written me a letter about him, from which I venture to make the following extract:—"No one could talk with Hewitt about his subject without feeling that it was a keenly attractive one in proportion as one studied it, and that he had gone deeper than any other old Indian into the folklore of the tribes with whom he had got into such close contact . . . He was also a dear, good fellow. One of his friends at the funeral dwelt much on the invariable 'charity' of his judgments of other people, and I confirmed it by an episode of his latter days when he had met with that frightful accident. A heavily laden farmer's cart passed over his ankle as he dismounted from his bicycle to avoid it. The driver was deaf, and swerved, without hearing the warning given, and he went on without knowing what he had done till he got home. Neither he nor his employer ever took the smallest step to express sorrow or even knowledge of it, yet Hewitt never expressed the least vexation with them, any more than with the accident."

H. BEVERIDGE.