

OBITUARY NOTICES.

THE Palestine Exploration Fund has suffered two serious losses at a time when it could least afford them (see p. 145). Prof. King and Prof. Alexander Macalister have been valuable workers on behalf of the Fund, the former as Chairman and the latter as Member of the Executive Committee. Prof. King had acted as Chairman, as successor to Colonel Sir Charles Watson, and was an Assyriologist of the first rank with a varied practical experience of excavation in the East. Prof. Macalister of Cambridge was a leading anatomist, but also a man of wide if not encyclopaedic knowledge which included Celtic archaeology and Egyptology. He was long a regular attendant at the Committee meetings, and when his son, Prof. R. A. Stewart Macalister, was excavating in Palestine he made some lengthy visits and gave him much valuable assistance.

A correspondent in the *Times* (Aug. 25th) writes: "By the premature death . . . of Dr. Leonard William King, at the age of 49, science loses a brilliant scholar in the field of Assyriology. Not only had he a European reputation on the literary side, but his vigorous personality and love of open air and adventure led him also to travel, to see and excavate the palaces of ancient Assyrian kings—a dual capacity so often demanded of archaeologists nowadays. Educated at Rugby and King's College, Cambridge, he entered the Egyptian and Assyrian Department of the British Museum shortly after he came down. . . . Not long after, he made a trip to Mesopotamia with a view to making excavations, and, as a result, he re-opened a year later the diggings on the site of Kouyunjik (Nineveh), where he worked for more than a year for the British Museum, until dysentery compelled him to return home and relinquish his place to a colleague. During this period of excavation he made an expedition into Persia to re-copy the great Inscription of Darius on the rock face at Behistun (which Sir Henry Rawlinson had previously published in the early days of his decipherment of cuneiform), and he and his colleague camped for a fortnight beneath the inscription in order to carry out the task. The whole text was satisfactorily re-copied, with the help of ropes

and tackling, and ultimately published by the British Museum with a full translation. It would be unnecessary to quote more than a few of King's works, which are all well known to Semitic scholars, but perhaps the monumental history of Babylonia, on which he was engaged at the time of his death, stands first of all his publications. . . . He became a Litt.D. (Cambridge) early in his career, and was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; King's College, London, also elected him Professor of Assyrian and Babylonian Archaeology. Those who worked with him can testify to one of the noble points of his character, always to be found in the unselfish masters of craft, that he never forgot his juniors, was ever ready to help them, and was scrupulously careful that they should have the credit for all the work they did. After the war broke out he put his knowledge of the Near East at the disposal of the Government in London. He leaves a wife and one son and daughter."

The Secretary of the Fund, Mr. J. D. Crace, wrote in the *Times* (Wednesday, Aug. 27th): "Our late much-valued Chairman, Colonel Sir Charles Watson, died in the spring of 1916, and was succeeded by Dr. Leonard King upon the unanimous vote of the Committee. At this time the investigation of Palestine itself had been stopped by the war; but the Committee have a most grateful sense of Dr. King's advice and keen interest, not only in their present publications but in their projects for future work. To him is also due the initiation of the scheme for the foundation of a British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem, under the joint action of the Palestine Exploration Fund and the British Academy, now maturing. Dr. King's genial and kindly disposition and his unaffected modesty made all association with him a pleasure."

Of Prof. Macalister the *Times* (Sept. 3rd) says that he "was born in Dublin in 1844 and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He was for a time Demonstrator of Anatomy at the College of Surgeons, and in 1869 he became Professor of Zoology at the University of Dublin, and eight years later Professor of Anatomy and Chirurgery. In 1883 he succeeded the late Prof. Sir George Humphrey in the Professorship of Anatomy, which had been founded by the university in 1707. Prof. Macalister was the first Professor of Anatomy who did not practise, but devoted himself entirely to the teaching and advancement of his subject. He was a singularly successful lecturer and, in spite of his considerable age, during the whole period of the war he carried on the work of his department

with unflinching vigour. . . . He was a man of wide culture. His early books dealt with animal morphology, and he was the author of numerous memoirs and text books for students in zoology and physiology. For a long time he was the editor of one of the chief anatomical publications. He was a pillar of the Presbyterian Church at Cambridge, and took a large part in the foundation of Westminster College, which is devoted to the training of Presbyterian ministers, and in the building of St. Columba's Church in Cambridge. He was also a well-known Egyptologist and had travelled extensively, especially in the East, where for a time one of his sons was Director of Excavations under the Palestine Exploration Fund. This son, Dr. R. A. S. Macalister, now holds the Professorship of Celtic Archaeology at University College, Dublin. . . . He was a man of singularly kind disposition, ever ready to help, and he will be mourned by a long series of Cambridge medical men."

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

(Continued from Q.S., 1919, p. 122.)

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES—(continued).

Serpents.

SERPENTS are called *heyel*[t] (حية), "the living," and, as already remarked, they are not very carefully distinguished, being thought to be all more or less poisonous. They are not made the subject of any special study, except by the Dervishes, and they keep their secrets to themselves.

In Gen. iii, 1, the serpent is called *nāhāsh* (נחש); cf. the brazen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness (Numb. xxi, 9, נחש נחושת). The name seems to linger on in the dark bluish coluber (*hanash*, حنش), with that re-arrangement of consonants which is very frequently met with when we compare the Arabic and Hebrew