

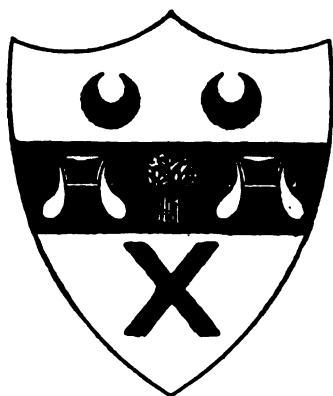
A MEMOIR OF
COLONEL SIR HENRY YULE

R.E., C.B., K.C.S.I., CORR. INST. FRANCE

WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HIS WRITINGS

BY HIS DAUGHTER
AMY FRANCES YULE

L. A. SOC. ANT. SCOT., ETC.



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"There await him with warm welcome
 All the heroes of old Story—
 The Venetians, the Cà Polo,
 Marco, Nicolo, Maffeo,
 Odoric of Pordenone,
 Ibn Batuta, Marignolli,
 Benedict de Goës—' Seeking
 Lost Cathay and finding Heaven.'
 Many more whose lives he cherished
 With the piety of learning ;
 Fading records, buried pages,
 Failing lights and fires forgotten,
 By his energy recovered,
 By his eloquence re-kindled.
 ' Moriturus vos saluto '
 Breathes his last the dying scholar,
 And the far off ages answer :
Immortales te salutant.

D. M."

The same idea had been previously embodied, in very felicitous language, by the late General Sir William Lockhart, in a letter which that noble soldier addressed to the present writer a few days after Yule's death. And Yule himself would have taken pleasure in the idea of those meetings with his old travellers, which seemed so certain to his surviving friends.⁷⁸

He rests in the old cemetery at Tunbridge Wells, with his second wife, as he had directed. A great gathering of friends attended the first part of the burial service which was held in London on 3rd January, 1890. Amongst those present were witnesses of every stage of his career, from his boyish days at the High School of Edinburgh downwards. His daughter, of course, was there, led by the faithful, peerless friend who was so soon to follow him into the Undiscovered Country.⁷⁹ She and his youngest nephew, with two cousins and a few old friends, followed his remains over the snow to the graveside. The epitaph subsequently inscribed on the tomb was penned by Yule himself, but is by no means representative of his powers in a kind of composition in which he had so often excelled in the service of others. As a composer of epitaphs and other monumental inscriptions few of our time have surpassed, if any have equalled him, in his best efforts.

⁷⁸ He was much pleased, I remember, by a letter he once received from a kindly Franciscan friar, who wrote : " You may rest assured that the Beato Odorico will not forget all you have done for him."

⁷⁹ F.-M. Lord Napier of Magdala, died 14th January, 1890.

SIR GEORGE UDNY YULE, C.B., K.C.S.I.*

GEORGE UDNY YULE, born at Inveresk in 1813, passed through Haileybury into the Bengal Civil Service, which he entered at the age of 18 years. For twenty-five years his work lay in Eastern Bengal. He gradually became known to the Government for his activity and good sense, but won a far wider reputation as a mighty hunter, alike with hog-spear and double barrel. By 1856 the roll of his slain tigers exceeded four hundred, some of them of special fame; after that he continued slaying his tigers, but ceased to count them. For some years he and a few friends used annually to visit the plains of the Brahmaputra, near the Garrow Hills—an entirely virgin country then, and swarming with large game. Yule used to describe his once seeing seven rhinoceroses at once on the great plain, besides herds of wild buffalo and deer of several kinds. One of the party started the theory that Noah's Ark had been shipwrecked there! In those days George Yule was the only man to whom the Maharajah of Nepal, Sir Jung Bahadur, conceded leave to shoot within his frontier.

Yule was first called from his useful obscurity in 1856. The year before, the Sonthals in insurrection disturbed the long unbroken peace of the Delta. These were a numerous non-Aryan, uncivilised, but industrious race, driven wild by local mismanagement, and the oppressions of Hindoo usurers acting through the regulation courts. After the suppression of their rising, Yule was selected by Sir F. Halliday, who knew his man, to be Commissioner of the Bhagulpoor Division, containing some six million souls, and embracing the hill country of the Sonthals. He obtained sanction to a code for the latter, which removed these people entirely from the Court system, and its tribe of leeches, and abolished all intermediaries between the Sahib and the Sonthal peasant. Through these measures, and his personal influence, aided by picked assistants, he was able to effect, with extraordinary rapidity, not only their entire pacification, but such a beneficial change in their material condition, that they have risen from a state of barbarous penury to comparative prosperity and comfort.

George Yule was thus engaged when the Mutiny broke out, and it soon made itself felt in the districts under him. To its suppression within his limits, he addressed himself with characteristic vigour. Thoroughly trusted by every class—by his Government, by those under him, by planters and by Zemindars—he organised a little force, comprising a small detachment of the 5th Regiment, a party of British sailors, mounted volunteers from the districts, etc., and of this he became practically the captain. Elephants were collected from all quarters to spare the legs of his infantry and sailors; while dog-carts were turned into limbers for the small three-pounders of the seamen. And with this little army George Yule scoured the Trans-Gangetic districts, leading it against bodies of the Mutineers, routing them upon more than one occasion, and out-manceuvring them by

* This notice includes the greater part of an article written by my father, and published in the *Sz. James' Gazette* of 18th January, 1886, but I have added other details from personal recollection and other sources.—A. F. Y.

his astonishing marches, till he succeeded in driving them across the Nepal frontier. No part of Bengal was at any time in such danger, and nowhere was the danger more speedily and completely averted.

After this Yule served for two or three years as Chief Commissioner of Oudh, where in 1862 he married Miss Pemberton, the daughter of a very able father, and the niece of Sir Donald MacLeod, of honoured and beloved memory. Then for four or five years he was Resident at Hyderabad, where he won the enduring friendship of Sir Salar Jung. "Everywhere he showed the same characteristic firm but benignant justice. Everywhere he gained the lasting attachment of all with whom he had intimate dealings—except tigers and scoundrels."

Many years later, indignant at the then apparently supine attitude of the British Government in the matter of the Abyssinian captives, George Yule wrote a letter (necessarily published without his name, as he was then on the Governor-General's Council), to the editor of an influential Indian paper, proposing a private expedition should be organised for their delivery from King Theodore, and inviting the editor (Dr. George Smith) to open a list of subscriptions in his paper for this purpose, to which Yule offered to contribute £2000 by way of beginning. Although impracticable in itself, it is probable that, as in other cases, the existence of such a project may have helped to force the Government into action. The particulars of the above incident were printed by Dr. Smith in his *Memoir of the Rev. John Wilson*, but are given here from memory.

From Hyderabad he was promoted in 1867 to the Governor-General's Council, but his health broke down under the sedentary life, and he retired and came home in 1869.

After some years of country life in Scotland, where he bought a small property, he settled near his brother in London, where he was a principal instrument in enabling Sir George Birdwood to establish the celebration of Primrose Day (for he also was "one of Mr. Gladstone's converts"). Sir George Yule never sought 'London Society' or public employment, but in 1877 he was offered and refused the post of Financial Adviser to the Khedive under the Dual control. When his feelings were stirred he made useful contributions to the public press, which, after his escape from official trammels, were always signed. The very last of these (*St. James' Gazette*, 24th February 1885) was a spirited protest against the snub administered by the late Lord Derby, as Secretary of State, to the Colonies, when they had generously offered assistance in the Soudan campaign. He lived a quiet, happy, and useful life in London, where he was the friend and unwearied helper of all who needed help. He found his chief interests in books and flowers; and in giving others pleasure. Of rare unselfishness and sweet nature, single in mind and motive, fearing God and knowing no other fear, he was regarded by a large number of people with admiring affection. He met his death by a fall on the frosty pavement at his door, in the very act of doing a kindness. An interesting sketch of Sir George Yule's Indian career, by one who knew him thoroughly, is to be found in Sir Edward Braddon's *Thirty Years of Shikar*. An account of his share in the origin of Primrose Day appeared in the *St. James' Gazette* during 1891.