

Obituary Notices

Dr. Leo Frobenius

WE regret to record the death, at the age of sixty-five years, of Dr. Leo Frobenius, the widely known German anthropologist and explorer, which took place at Biganzolo on Lake Maggiore, Italy, on June 9.

The claim of Frobenius to be remembered in the annals of anthropology will rest on his intrepidity and assiduous devotion to exploration in African lands and among African peoples. In the course of his life he made no less than twelve journeys of exploration, all of a more or less arduous character, and it was on the last of these, when in 1934 he penetrated depths of the Sahara scarcely known to the Bedouin, and reached the sources of the River Ouwenat, that he contracted the malady which forced him to abandon the expedition and after some years of illness was the ultimate cause of his death.

Frobenius was born on June 29, 1873, in Berlin. At an early age he was attracted to the studies which became his life-work. After spending some years at the ethnological museums of Bremen, Leipzig and Basle, he determined to devote himself to exploration. In 1904 he founded the German Central African Research Expedition and embarked upon a journey to the Congo Basin, which lasted until 1906. In the following year he set out again, and between 1907 and 1915 completed six further journeys in Africa, visiting the Upper Niger, Timbuctoo, Togoland, the northern Sahara, the western Sudan, Khartoum and El-Obeid, Algeria and Tunisia, and finally Turkey and northern Abyssinia.

Henceforth for some years Frobenius was busily engaged in working up the anthropological material he had collected in Africa, and he published a number of important books and papers dealing with his observations and conclusions. He was a bold, original and independent thinker, but as he had shown in his earliest work as a young man, apt to generalize on insufficient evidence, as well as to give too wide an application to an interpretation which might be valid for a restricted area which had come under his observation. His theory of cultural continuity and cyclical development, in which he maintained that the various phases of civilization had developed in a manner exactly analogous to the growth of a living organism, was the subject of much embittered controversy.

In 1924 Frobenius founded the Frankfort Research Institute of Cultural Morphology, and four years later set out with seven assistants on an expedition to Central and South Africa, in the course of which he visited and conducted investigations among the Zimbabwe ruins of Rhodesia, shortly before the excavations by Miss G. Caton-Thompson, conducted under the ægis of the British Association, which was to visit South Africa in the following year. Frobenius

found himself unable to accept the conclusion that these ruins were Bantu in origin, as suggested by Randall-MacIver in 1905, and as was confirmed by Miss Caton-Thompson's investigations, but arrived at the view that some six thousand years ago this area had been an outpost of Sumerian and Babylonian culture. He also concluded that the iron age had begun in Africa a thousand years earlier than in Europe, iron working having entered Africa from India by way of Madagascar. In the search of further evidence to support this conclusion, he afterwards visited India. Two later expeditions were to Tripoli in 1932, when he studied the prehistoric course of the Nile, and in 1934 to the Sahara, as already mentioned, his last journey. In this year he was appointed director of the Racial Museum at Frankfort, and for the rest of his life divided his time between Frankfort and his residence on Lake Maggiore.

Mr. W. R. Barclay, O.B.E.

WE regret to announce that Mr. William R. Barclay died at his home in Birmingham on September 16, aged sixty-three years. He was a leading metallurgist and one of the outstanding authorities on non-ferrous metallurgy.

Mr. Barclay was educated privately and later attended the Sheffield Technical College (now the University of Sheffield). During 1910-19, he was lecturer in electro-metallurgy in the University of Sheffield. During the Great War, he became chief metallurgist and assistant director in the Non-Ferrous Rolled Metal Section and technical director of the Electro-Metallurgical Committee of the Ministry of Munitions. He was made O.B.E. for his services.

In 1928, Mr. Barclay became managing director of Henry Wiggin and Co., Ltd., and in 1931 he was appointed consulting metallurgist to the Mond Nickel Co., Ltd. He was largely instrumental in initiating the company research and development organization, as a result of which, in conjunction later with the International Nickel Co., innumerable new uses were discovered for nickel and nickel alloys.

In 1936, Mr. Barclay was elected president of the Institute of Metals, and he was re-elected to serve a further term in 1937. It was during his presidency that the Institute decided to award an annual medal for outstanding services to non-ferrous metallurgy.

Mr. Barclay was well-known in metallurgical circles in the United States, and he was invited to deliver the Calvin W. Rice Lecture to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in June of this year. At the same time, he was to be awarded the degree of doctor of science by the Stevens Institute of Technology. Unfortunately, owing to his illness, he was unable to attend these functions.