

JAMES RENDEL HARRIS, M.A., D.Litt., D.Theol., etc., was born at Plymouth, 27th January, 1852, and died at Selly Oak, Birmingham, 1st March, 1941. For long accounted Plymouth's most distinguished living son, he was educated at the Grammar School in this city, and at Clare College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1874 as third Wrangler, was elected Fellow, and subsequently became Moderator and Examiner in the Mathematical Tripos. For three years from early in 1882, Dr. Harris was Professor of New Testament Greek at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and during the next seven years was Professor of Biblical Languages at Haverford College, Pennsylvania. In 1889, on his first visit to the Near East, he discovered an important Syriac MS. of the 7th century in a convent on Mt. Sinai—this was the *Apology* of Aristides, of which only fragments had previously been known. In 1893 Dr. Harris became University Reader in Palæography at Cambridge, and was enabled to travel extensively in the East in search of manuscripts. In 1896 came his arduous and hazardous journey with his wife (*née* Helen Balkwill, a Plymouth lady) through Armenia, to bring help to the stricken population after the recent terrible massacres.

In 1903 Dr. Harris was appointed Professor of Theology at Leyden, but a few months later the call came to occupy the post of Director of Studies at the newly formed Quaker Settlement for Social and Religious Study, which had been founded through the munificence of the late George Cadbury at his old home at Woodbrooke, near Birmingham. In 1907 Dr. Harris was President of the Free Church Council; two years later came what has been called his greatest gift to scholarship—the discovery and translation of the long lost Odes of Solomon. In 1910 he was Haskell lecturer at Oberlin College; and for many years a continuous flow of scholarly publications came from his pen.

In November, 1916, Dr. Harris sailed for India on a visit to his great friend Dr. J. H. Moulton, but his ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean. Rescued by a hospital ship, he

was taken to Alexandria and spent the winter in Egypt, improving the occasion by discovering what was stated to be the oldest known fragment of the Bible, a papyrus roll of the Book of Deuteronomy. In the spring of 1917 Dr. Moulton decided to return to England, and Dr. Harris joined him at Port Said. On the night of 4th April their liner was torpedoed and all had to take to the boats. During the next four days and nights their plight was so great that one-half of the company, including Dr. Moulton, perished.

In 1922-23 Dr. Harris, then seventy, organized another expedition to Mt. Sinai, starting this time from Tor on the Red Sea and journeying on camels. He was on the track of a reported manuscript copy of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, or *Harmony of the Gospels*, but had to endure a severe disappointment. However, the expedition resulted in one of the most notable lectures ever delivered in the Athenæum, for on the 25th October, 1923, we received at first hand the Doctor's account of his adventurous journey. No one who had the good fortune to be present is likely to forget that description so punctuated with the liveliest witticisms and unconventional sallies. The Doctor had been elected Honorary Member of our Institution in 1914, and, notwithstanding his many greater honours, was keenly appreciative of this one coming from his native place.

In 1918 Dr. Harris handed over the care of Woodbrooke to a younger man, and, accepting the most congenial appointment of Curator of Oriental MSS. in the John Rylands Library, removed to Manchester. In 1920, both in Holland and in Plymouth, he was actively engaged in the Mayflower Tercentenary Celebrations, and in publishing the intriguing *Return of the Mayflower*. Some of our City Fathers will remember a conference in the Mayor's Parlour, when the Doctor broached a scheme for the founding of an Anglo-American University to be built within the walls of the Citadel. He was confident of being able to secure substantial American aid for such an attractive project.

During the Doctor's stay in Egypt he fell under the spell of its remote past, making extensive tours to ancient sites, and spending much time in study at the great museum in Cairo. During his last years he was afflicted with blindness, and found his greatest satisfaction in developing theories of far-flung colonizing activities on the part of early Egyptian traders, whose settlements he thought he could trace in this

country as well as in others. In this connection also he published in 1927 a work entitled *Eucharistic Origins*, in which he maintained that the Christian Eucharist had been taken over from the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris.

It is a pleasure to announce that his literary executor has presented us with more than fifty of the Doctor's monographs on various subjects. These are being held in safe custody and will be handed over on the conclusion of hostilities. It may also be mentioned that the valuable oil painting of Dr. Harris, presented to the City Art Gallery by his elder brother, Mr. H. Vigurs Harris, J.P., is in safe keeping.