

accumulating. Captain Tilho, of the recent Anglo-French Boundary Commission, points out that since the explorations of Barth and Nachtigal the form and area of Lake Chad have been profoundly changed. Navigation is only possible in certain places, and boats continually run aground. Instead of the great waves which, during strong winds, gave the lake the appearance of an ocean, there is now a tendency toward the development of a vast marsh (*Ciel et Terre*, November 16, 1906). It may be noted, in this connection, that there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that Lake Chad is undergoing a temporary desiccation, which may again be followed, after some years, by another period of high water.

R. DEC. WARD

JOHN M. BROOKE

At his home on the outskirts of Lexington, Va., on December 14, within one week of his eightieth birthday, Colonel Brooke passed away.

John Mercer Brooke was born December 18, 1826, near Tampa, Florida. His father, General George M. Brooke, of Virginia, was a distinguished officer in the war of 1812, and his mother, Miss Thomas, was a native of Massachusetts. At the age of a little over fourteen years he became a midshipman in the navy, and three years were spent in cruising. In 1847 he was graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and soon afterward was assigned to work in the coast survey. From 1851 to 1853 he was stationed at the Naval Observatory in Washington, where began his life-long friendship with Matthew F. Maury, the distinguished hydrographer.

For several years prior to the civil war Lieutenant Brooke was engaged in making hydrographic surveys in the Pacific Ocean, particularly in the archipelago and along the coasts of China and Japan. It was in 1854 that Commodore M. C. Perry induced the Japanese to sign their first foreign treaty by which trade was opened with the United States, and good treatment was promised to shipwrecked crews. Brooke was thus allowed ready access to Japan, and while he was sojourning in Yeddo in 1859 his ship was de-

stroyed by a typhoon. He remained a number of months at Yokohama, during which he did much to develop the confidence of the Japanese in their foreign friends. They decided to send an embassy to the United States and invited Brooke to accompany it. So highly was he esteemed that he was invited by the Japanese ambassadors to help himself from a large chest of native gold, but this he declined. On the arrival of the embassy at Washington the first request of the ambassador was that the services rendered by Brooke to Japan should be recorded in the archives of the United States.

It was during his extended hydrographic work in the Pacific that Brooke thoroughly tested his deep-sea sounding apparatus, the invention for which probably he became best known. He had previously originated it at the Naval Observatory. With but few modifications his method has continued in use to the present time. It has been one of the most important elements in extending our knowledge of ocean depths and in rendering possible the first successful ocean cables.

Soon after Brooke's return to America the country became rent by civil war. Along with Maury he cast his lot with the seceding states, and the rest of his life was spent in Virginia. As a Confederate officer he gave his attention especially to naval ordnance. While Parrott was experimenting at West Point on the improvement of cast-iron cannon by reenforcement of the breech with a wrought-iron jacket, Brooke was absorbed in similar experiments at Richmond and Norfolk, and the Brooke guns were conceded to be the best made at the south. While Ericsson was developing his *Monitor* at Greenpoint Brooke and his associates were building the first Confederate ironclad, known as the *Merrimac*, which took part in the dramatic naval engagement at Hampton Roads. He remained at the head of the ordnance department of the Confederate navy until this navy ceased to exist.

After the close of the war Maury and Brooke became associated as professors in the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, where Maury died in 1873. Brooke continued

to hold the chair of physics and astronomy until 1899, when the infirmities of old age necessitated his retirement with the rank of colonel. From that time until his recent death he lived in strict seclusion, retaining his connection with the institution as professor emeritus.

Personally Colonel Brooke was in his old age somewhat taciturn, retiring and singularly indifferent to popular recognition. The extraordinary influence which he exerted upon the Japanese shows that in his young manhood he was much more communicative, and that he was the possessor of great force, both of mind and of character. His ideals were lofty, and his fidelity to these and to his friends was unswerving. On coming to Lexington in 1866 he came into a congenial coterie that included such men as Robert E. Lee, Custis Lee, Pendleton, Letcher, Williamson and Maury, all of whom had held high office in the Confederacy. Among these intimates he was genial, full of humor and full of resources. Despite his modesty he was positive, a good hater, an intolerant foe to shiftiness and sham. In the performance of duty he was uncompromising to such an extent as to appear at times eccentric. These qualities became more pronounced with advancing years, and as death carried away one after another of his old friends he gradually became silent and exclusive. But to a willing ear he had a plenty to give, and the present writer remembers with pleasure his first interview with the solitary graybeard to whom he had just introduced himself. The old genial spirit came back as he became eloquent over his reminiscences of the Sea of Japan. During the last few years he has rarely ever been seen or heard, and the arrival of death was so gentle as to be scarcely recognized.

W. LeCONTE STEVENS

*PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN
ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

Announcement.—The American Ethnological Society is about to begin a series of publications which is to contain authentic material collected among native tribes of

America. The volumes are to appear at irregular intervals.

Notwithstanding the large amount of work that has been done on American ethnology, comparatively little material has been collected regarding the customs, beliefs, and ideas of the natives in their own words. Most of our collections have been obtained indirectly through the assistance of interpreters, or are discussions of information collected from individuals more or less familiar with English or with the trade jargon.

Knowledge possessed by the Indians is of great importance as well to the ethnologist as to the student of the early history of the American continent. For this reason authentic records of information given by the Indians seem to be of prime importance for a thorough study of these subjects.

The American Ethnological Society, in beginning its series of publications, is desirous of collecting and preserving for future use such records, and it is hoped that this undertaking will meet with the support of the public.

The following volumes of the publications of the American Ethnological Society are in preparation:

VOL. I. WILLIAM JONES, Ph.D., research assistant, Carnegie Institution, Fox Texts. In press. A collection of historical tales, myths, and accounts of personal religious experiences collected among the Fox Indians, a branch of the Algonquian stock. Recorded in original text, and published with translations.

VOL. II. EDWARD SAPIR, 'The Upper Chinook.' In press. An account of the Chinook Indians of the Upper Columbia River, and a collection of myths and personal accounts. Original texts and translations.

VOL. III. ROLAND B. DIXON, Ph.D., instructor in anthropology, Harvard University, 'Myths of the Maidu Indians of California.'

VOL. IV. FRANZ BOAS, Ph.D., professor of anthropology, Columbia University, 'Myths of the Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia.'

VOL. V. ROLAND B. DIXON, Ph.D., professor of anthropology, Harvard University,