

WILLIAM DUNBAR SUTHERLAND, C.I.E., M.D., C.M.,

LIEUT.-COLONEL, I.M.S.

WE regret to announce the death of Lieut.-Colonel William Dunbar Sutherland, C.I.E., M.D., C.M., I.M.S., lately Editor of this *Gazette*, which took place at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Calcutta, on June 27th, 1920, after an operation for appendicitis, at the early age of fifty-three.

William Dunbar Sutherland was born at Lucknow on the 13th September, 1866. He was the son of Robert Sutherland, an officer in the Army Medical Service, and a Scottish Highlander. Of his early life we know little, and Sutherland rarely spoke of it except in connection with his beloved *alma mater*, the University of Edinburgh. During his years of study at Edinburgh he was greatly impressed with the lectures of the late Sir Henry Littlejohn, the great exponent of medical jurisprudence. We may assume that it was the latter's influence which induced Sutherland to take an interest in the subject, to which he devoted the most virile years of his life, and to the advancement of which in India he contributed so much. In addition to the lectures of Littlejohn at Edinburgh, Sutherland also attended those of the famous French medico-legal jurist, Brouardel, in Paris, there laying the foundation of his very exceptional knowledge of the French language.

He graduated in 1888 as M.B., C.M., Edinburgh, and joined the I.M.S. on the 31st March, 1890, securing seventh place out of seventeen vacancies. On arrival in India he was posted to the Madras Presidency, where he served till February, 1891, when he was transferred to Burma in medical charge of the 19th Madras Infantry at Mandalay. While in Burma Sutherland acquired a considerable knowledge of Burmese. There, too, he had his only experience of active service while serving with the Nwengal column in the Chin Hills. He left the Chin Hills in August, 1892, and shortly after his return to India was transferred to civil employment in the Central Provinces, where he remained in various stations on and off for nearly twenty years, chiefly at Saugor and Jubbulpore.

In 1906 Major Sutherland, as he then was, took the degree of M. D. at the University of Edinburgh on a thesis in connection with blood-stains, and this brings us to the history of his life-work. Reading of the discovery of serological tests for the

presence and origin of blood in stains, he proceeded to England in 1906 to take up the study of the subject. Finding English interest in this subject, as was the case with many scientific subjects before the war, lukewarm or non-existent, he was forced to go to Germany to pursue his studies. He first of all attended a course of lectures on tropical diseases at the Institute at Hamburg, thereafter returning to England for four months' study at the British Museum. On completion of his work at the latter institution he again returned to Germany, and worked in Ehrlich's laboratory at Frankfort-am-Main, where he devoted himself to research work in connection with tests for blood-stains.

Having exhaustively studied the subject in almost every European language, he published, in 1907, his well-known work on Bloodstains. The book on its appearance was very favourably reviewed, and was regarded by those who, from their medico-legal experience, were qualified to judge, as a work of singular merit.

In September, 1908, Major Sutherland was placed on special duty in Calcutta with a view to testing the possibility or otherwise of utilising bio-chemical tests for the origin of blood-stains in medico-legal work in India. At the end of a year he reported that the new test could be successfully applied in India.

After a short visit to Vienna in 1911, where he made the acquaintance of such men as Professor Sigmund Freud and Dr. Friedrich S. Krauss, Sutherland returned to India, and, in 1912, formally opened a serological laboratory at Calcutta, which undertook work for the Courts of Justice. In 1914 he was appointed Imperial Serologist to the Government of India. In this appointment, except for a short visit to England in 1918, he remained until his death.

Of the technical side of his work as Imperial Serologist few are qualified to judge, but it is universally recognised that the tests which he, and he alone, introduced into India were of the highest value to medical jurisprudence in this country. Sutherland was a master of technique, and no one who has seen him work can doubt the assertion that in him we have lost a scientist of great merit and rare technical skill. Among the tokens of recognition which he received for his professional

work may be mentioned his election to a Fellowship of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1917, and his admission to Companionship of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire in 1919.

It is unnecessary to write much further of his professional work and knowledge. He was immensely well read in most branches of his profession; but he was profoundly versed in forensic medicine and psychology, having exhaustively studied the continental literature of these subjects. He is said to have held but a poor opinion of British medico-legal authorities.

Colonel Sutherland was an accomplished linguist. He not only spoke and wrote French and German with fluency and ease, but had a considerable inside knowledge of French life and thought. His knowledge of Italian and Spanish was of no mean order. Among Eastern languages he was well versed in Urdu and Burmese. Of his own language he was a complete master. He spoke and wrote English with a precision and delicacy which few attain. Though his knowledge of the classical languages was limited to Latin, the accuracy and relevance of his quotations from masters of this tongue were often a surprise and delight to the casual hearer.

Of his personal characteristics we can only speak with a poignant sense of regret at his loss. Colonel Sutherland was a man who, blessed with more than the average share of nature's gifts, widely read on a variety of subjects, and withal a polished

and witty conversationalist, never obtruded his accomplishments. It was given to but a few of his close friends to appreciate him at his true worth. From the laity he hid his gifts under a cloak of genial cynicism, and will be remembered more for his power of repartee and mimicry and his extraordinary memory for details, including the naming of persons and places as well as the citing of dates, than for his intellectual and professional attainments.

He filled the editorial chair of the *Indian Medical Gazette* for only a few months; but in that short time he did much to improve its tone. Loathing as he did humbug and hypocrisy of any kind, and fearing no one's opinion, the editorials from his pen were particularly fresh and stimulating. He had a facility for bringing his wide knowledge of medicine in all its aspects to bear on the problem in hand. Indeed it may be said that, from his intellectual attainments and independence of thought, no man was more fitted to fill that chair than William Dunbar Sutherland.

By his early demise the Indian Medical Service has suffered an irreparable loss. He was one of the old type—witty, polished and cosmopolitan on the surface, intellectual, capable and inflexible below. It is an honour—but a sad honour—to write the epitaph of such a man.

Colonel Sutherland leaves a widow and one son to mourn his loss. To them we can only express our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in their sad bereavement.

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BOGUS DIPLOMAS.

HALF-EDUCATED PEOPLE desire keenly to pose as learned men. Hence the rich harvest which degree-mills have in America and India. In 1916 the "delegate-general" of the International University of Illinois was ready for a consideration to secure for any man any degree that he liked to pay for. He himself began as A.M., Ph.D., LL.D., but later blossomed forth as Ph.D., D.C.L., LL.D.! However, his status as a Commissioner of Deeds for various States of the Union was ended by the commissions

being revoked, and he was compelled to return his "papers," which had to do with an institution that had taken over the business of the Western University of Illinois, which in its turn was, through one Henry Clough, connected with an equally fraudulent degree-mill—the Odessa University of Odessa and Spokane, Wash. How many of the half-educated paid their money and received their degrees from this "delegate-general" we know not; but now that he is no longer able to satisfy the demand for certificates of learning, doubtless others will endeavour to make a dishonest livelihood by imitating him. In the erstwhile capital of India, degrees and diplomas are to-day being granted by certain bodies whose chief anxiety appears to be the collection of fees, which, to do them justice, are very