

largely used in the United States for the purpose of fumigating nursery stock and as a means of ridding orchard trees of their pests. It has also been successfully used in the Cape for ridding jail wards of the bed bug and sleeping cars in South Africa are nowadays rid of vermin in this way. The gas is made by the action of sulphuric acid and on potassium cyanide. The room to be fumigated is made airtight. The sulphuric acid is placed in an open dish and a lump of cyanide added. The period of exposure should be at least two hours and the room should not be entered till some hours after and then only after opening the doors and windows from outside. A whiff of fairly strong gas kills at once.

Rats and fleas and many insects are killed at once. Grain so disinfected is not made poisonous or dangerous.

Capt. Stevenson concludes that it is a rapid and effective disinfectant of clothes, but it is too dangerous for general employment as a disinfectant for plague-infected houses.

Medical Society.

MEDICAL SECTION OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL.

THE November meeting was held on the 9th when the Secretary announced that about one hundred pounds worth of medical reference books selected by the special committee had been received and could be taken out by members under the conditions of the library rules.

Lt.-Colonel Drury (in the chair) showed two Indian brothers, one a young boy presenting a cretinoid condition, together with enlargement of the thyroid gland, and the other a young man with a myxedematous condition with a greatly enlarged thyroid. Both had markedly improved on treatment with thyroid extract. Coloured drawings of the condition on their admission were also shown.

Lt.-Colonel Maynard showed a case of venous angioma of the orbit. When in the erect position the eye on the affected side appeared to be sunken, but after he had held his head down for a few minutes marked proptosis was evident. He proposed to try electrolysis in its treatment.

Captain Megaw showed: (1) A case of Captain Munro's of pigmentation of the face and hands of a patchy distribution following the use of quinine in a Mahomedan. A section of the skin had been cut by Major L. Rogers, but only some excess of the normal pigment was found. (2) A European suffering from leprosy, who had shown marked improvement without any active treatment. The case showed the necessity of caution in attributing a temporary improvement to the use of any specific treatment such as nastin, which two speakers stated they had used

without any effect in leprosy. (3) A case of angioneurotic oedema in a young adult European patient.

Lt.-Colonel Maynard read a paper on the use of bismuth paste in the diagnosis and treatment of sinuses (which will be published in due course).

Dr. Adrian Caddy referred to a paper in the Annals of Surgery for May on this subject. The paste was first used for diagnosis and subsequently found to possess a curative value. Bismuth subnitrate is used.

SPECIAL ARTICLES.

I.

SIR JOHN MCNEILL, G.C.B.

MESSRS. MURRAY AND Co. have recently published a Life of the Right Honourable Sir John McNeill, G.C.B., compiled by his grand-daughter.* Of the many distinguished men who have done good service to the State, in the Indian Medical Service, McNeill stands pre-eminently first. Able in his profession, fearless in action, successful in administration, wise in counsel, he carved his name deep in the annals of British diplomacy in the Middle East.

John McNeill, third son of John McNeill, Laird of Colonsay, was born on that island on 12th August 1795. He attended the Arts classes at Glasgow in 1806, and at St. Andrews in 1807-1809, and entered Edinburgh University as a medical student in 1811, taking the degree of M. D. in 1814. The same year, at the age of nineteen, he married his first wife, Innes, daughter of George Robinson, of Gask and Clermiston. He received a Commission as Assistant Surgeon in the Bombay Medical Service in 1816, sailed on 4th May 1816, and landed at Bombay in September; but had the misfortune to lose his wife, on 5th November of the same year. He took part in the third Maratha War, joining the Baroda Field Force in November 1816, and was present at the capture of Palampur, Deesa, and Kurja; in the Southern Konkaw, at the capture of Kairi, and in Cutch, at the capture of Bhujia. He was then sent with the Expedition to Persia in 1819, returning to India in 1820. During the same year he was appointed to succeed Dr. Richard Sharp as Surgeon to the English Mission at Teheran, and left India for ever. He subsequently wrote that, out of fifty months' service in India, above forty were spent in the field, and the greater part of the remaining ten on a sickbed. Even out of these four years, much of one year was passed in the Expedition to Persia, the scene of his future labours.

* Memoir of the Right Hon. Sir John McNeill, G.C.B., and of his second wife, Elizabeth Wilson. By their granddaughter. With Portraits and Illustrations. London. John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1910. [Large Octavo, pp. VIII. 426, price 15 shillings.]

During the early years of the nineteenth century, several English Missions were sent to the Court of Fateh Ali Shah, who had succeeded his uncle, Agha Muhammad, first king of the Kajar dynasty, on the murder of the latter in 1797. In November 1800, Captain (afterwards Sir John) Malcolm was sent by the Indian Government to the Court of Persia. In 1807, Sir Harford Jones was despatched by the British Government as Envoy, with Mr. Morier as Private Secretary, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Willock as Assistant. Malcolm was also again sent to the Persian Court from India in 1808, having on his staff, amongst others, Briggs, the translator of Ferishta, Rawlinson, and Captain Kinneir, afterwards Sir John Kinneir Macdonald. In 1811 Jones was succeeded by Sir Gore Ouseley, who returned to England in 1814, leaving Morier as Chargé d' Affaires. Morier was succeeded by Henry Willock, who held that post at the Court of Persia when McNeill arrived as Medical Officer in January 1821. Treaties with Persia were negotiated by Malcolm in 1800, Jones in 1809, Ouseley in 1812, and by Morier and Ellis in 1814.

Early in 1822 Henry Willock thought it advisable to proceed in person to England, leaving his brother, Captain George Willock, in charge, and took McNeill with him; while at home McNeill married again, on 1st January 1823, his second wife being Elizabeth Wilson, who shared his early hardships and his later successes for forty-five years. He left England for Persia, with his wife, on 30th June 1823, travelling *via* St. Petersburg, and reached Tabriz on 8th October. The Indian Government in 1824 determined to appoint Colonel Kinneir Macdonald as Envoy to the Court of Persia, Henry Willock remaining as first Assistant, Captain J. N. R. Campbell being appointed second Assistant, and Dr. Magrath, of the Bombay Service, Surgeon, McNeill remaining on somewhat indefinite terms in political employment. Macdonald's mission was not actually sent for over a year. Dr. Magrath resigned his appointment as Surgeon, and when Macdonald and Campbell joined, in 1826, McNeill remained as Surgeon. Henry Willock was sent home on duty in August 1826. The Persian Government considering that an Envoy from India was inferior in dignity to one from England, in December 1826 Macdonald was appointed to represent the Court of St. James, as well as the Government of India, at Teheran.

In 1826, a longstanding dispute between Persia and Russia culminated in war. The Persians, successful at first, were completely defeated in the end. Persia made peace in 1828, ceding the provinces of Erivan and Nakchivan, and paying an indemnity of ten crores of *tomams*.* McNeill was employed in the negotiations

between the Persian Court and the victorious Russian Commander, earning the complete confidence of both. At one time he had to borrow, on his personal responsibility, one crore of *tomams*, as an instalment of the indemnity, from the Shah. This sum was repaid by the Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza. McNeill was offered by the Czar the Cross of the second class of the Order of St. Anne, and the first class of the Lion and Sun by the Shah, but was not allowed to accept either decoration.

The Envoy, Sir John Macdonald, died on 11th June 1830, Captain Campbell remained in charge, with McNeill as sole assistant, Dr. Cormick being medical officer, and in 1832 was confirmed as Envoy, the post having been declined by Major Stewart, of the Indian Army. In 1830, McNeill was appointed Resident at Bushire, but could not be spared from Teheran until December 1831, when he set out to join that post. He had got as far as Busrah, when his appointment was cancelled, and he returned to Teheran as assistant, having spent three months on a most toilsome and perilous journey, during which his unfortunate wife was confined of her fourth child, and having lost of all his allowances, about £375, for three months, during which he held neither post, as well as having expended over £1,000 on the journey.

In 1833, he received the first class of the Lion and Sur. Mrs. McNeill and her one surviving child left for England in June 1834, McNeill following on 26th September, travelling *via* Constantinople, Belgrade, Vienna, and Frankfort. While at home he wrote several articles on the Eastern question, in the *British and Foreign Review*, *Quarterly Review*, etc., and a pamphlet, "The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East," which was published in English and French, in 1835, a second Edition being issued in 1854, at the beginning of the Crimean War.

Great changes happened in Persia about this time. The Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, died on 21st October 1833, the Shah, Fateh Ali, on 23rd October 1834, his grandson, Muhammad Mirza, son of Abbas Mirza, succeeding to the throne. In December 1834, Mr. Ellis was appointed Envoy extraordinary to Persia, superseding Sir John Campbell. On 10th February 1835, McNeill was appointed Secretary to the Embassy, with dormant credentials as minister, but remained at home for another year; and on 5th June 1836 started for Persia as "Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy extraordinary from the Court of St. James, to the Shah of Persia," with a salary of £6,000 a year. His staff comprised Captain Justin Sheil, Secretary to Legation; Captain Charles Stoddart, Military Secretary; Captain R. D. H. Macdonald, Commander of the Escort; Dr. James P. Riach, first Medical Officer, and W. Charles, W. Bell, Surgeon. All his staff were already in Persia. Travelling *via* Paris, Munich and Vienna, McNeill met Mr. Ellis, the retiring Envoy, at Bayazid, on the Turkish

* In the Memoir (page 105), ten crores of *tomams* is said to be equivalent to two million pounds. But, taking the *tomam* as worth eight shillings, ten crores, i.e., one hundred million *tomams*, would be equivalent to forty million pounds.

Frontier, and presented his credentials to the new Shah on 11th December 1836. He had in the meantime retired from the Company's Service on 11th June 1836.

In 1837, Persia laid siege to Herat, a project to which McNeill was strongly opposed. The Afghans, aided by Lieut. Eldred Pottinger, made a determined resistance, and the siege ended in failure. While Envoy in Persia, McNeill recommended that the British Government should recognize Dost Muhammad as Amir of Afghanistan, advice which, if it had been followed, might have averted the first Afghan War. In 1839, diplomatic relations with Persia came to an abrupt rupture. On 2nd January 1839, McNeill left for England, via the Caucasus and St. Petersburg, Colonel Sheil, who remained in charge, withdrew to Erzerum, and the other British officers were sent to Bagdad. Arriving in England early in March, he received the Grand Cross of the Bath. In June 1841, friendly relations with Persia being resumed, he set out again for Teheran, arriving in September. On this occasion Charles Scott, second son of Sir Walter Scott, accompanied him as assistant, but died on 28th October, a month after his arrival. On 7th May 1842 McNeill left Persia for good. On the journey home he met with a serious carriage accident, which nearly proved fatal, at Auch, in France. Colonel (afterwards Sir Justin) Sheil remained at Teheran, in charge of the Mission, and was soon afterwards confirmed as Envoy.

The first part of McNeill's career had now come to an end, but he was to serve his country, in other capacities, for many years. On 30th August 1845, the Scottish Poor Law Act was passed. A Board of Supervision was appointed, with McNeill as Chairman, the other two members being Mr. Home Drummond and Sir George Macpherson Grant. This appointment he held for twenty-three years, resigning in March 1868, when he received a pension of his full salary, £1,200 a year. From 1852 to 1854 the Board were kept hard at work, arranging for emigration to Australia from the crowded crofts of the Western Islands.

In 1854, the Crimean War broke out. The British Army landed in the Crimea on 18th September 1854. Two days later the Allies defeated the Russians on the heights of the Alma, and shortly afterwards at Inkerman, after which began the siege of Sebastopol. A cyclone on 14th November devastated the British camp, and destroyed many of the supply ships. Sheltered only in tents, many of which were rotten, and fed chiefly on salt meat and hard biscuit, without forage for the horses, or sufficient covering for themselves, the army suffered terribly from cholera, fever, and scurvy. These facts were widely published by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Russell, the *Times* correspondent and aroused great indignation in England. A motion for enquiry, brought forward in the House of Commons by Mr. Roebuck, was carried by 127 votes, and

the Government resigned in February 1855. The reconstructed Cabinet resolved on several measures of improvement, one of which was the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the working of the Commissariat Department in all its branches, of supply and issue. Of this Commission Sir John McNeill was appointed Chief, the second Commissioner being Colonel Tulloch, Commandant of military pensioners in Great Britain. Neither of the Commissioners received any special pay as such, each continuing to draw the pay of the appointment he held at home.

The Commissioners reached Pera on 8th March 1855. Before this the worst was passed, but they had a difficult and unpleasant task before them. The chief wants were fresh meat and fresh bread. Colonel Tulloch started camp bakeries; Sir John at once made arrangements for obtaining supplies of meat, forage, fuel, and vegetables, from the southern shores of the Black Sea. The Commission took evidence for fifty-five days, examining the Commanding Officer, Surgeon, and Quartermaster of every regiment in the Crimea, also a large number of superior and Staff Officers, from the Quartermaster-General, General (afterwards Lord) Airey downwards. They sailed from the Crimea at the end of May, and left Constantinople on 11th June. They presented to Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea, and to Lord Panmure, the War Minister, a preliminary report, which was afterwards incorporated with the first report, dated 10th June 1855, and laid before Parliament, along with the second report, in January 1856. Their reports were the cause of much acrimonious dispute at home, being attacked as exaggerated and incorrect, and a Board of General Officers was appointed to enquire into and report on their conclusions. In a debate in the House of Commons on 29th February 1856, their reports were much criticised, and scarcely defended by the Government, though warmly approved by General Sir De Lacy Evans, who had himself commanded a Division in the Crimea, and by Mr. Gladstone. Subsequently the Government offered the two Commissioners a sum of £1,000 each, as a tardy recognition of their services, but this offer was declined by both. Finally, Sir John McNeill was offered the choice of a Baronetcy, or a Privy Councillorship, and chose the latter, while a K. C. B. was conferred on Colonel Tulloch.

Sir John continued to hold his post as President of the Board of Supervision up to March 1868. On 26th November 1868 Lady McNeill died. Two years later, on 26th August 1870, he married for a third time, his third wife being Lady Emma Campbell, sister of the Duke of Argyll. He died at Cannes, aged 87, on 17th May 1883.

Sir John was not the only member of his family, who did good service to the State. His eldest brother, Captain Alexander McNeill, was

lost, with his wife and two daughters, in the wreck of the S. S. *Orion*, near Port Patrick, in June 1850. Two sons were saved, the elder of whom subsequently became Major-General Sir John Carstairs McNeill, v.c., Equerry to Queen Victoria. His second brother, Duncan, joined the Scottish Bar, and was successively Sheriff of Perthshire, Solicitor-General for Scotland, and sat on the Bench as Lord Colonsay. His third brother, Archibald, was a writer to the Signet in Edinburgh. The fourth, Brigadier-General Malcolm McNeill, of the Madras Army, fell a victim to sunstroke while leading the attack on Prome, in the second Burmese War, in 1852. John Wilson, better known by the pseudonym of Christopher North, was the eldest brother of his second wife.

Many members of the I. M. S., probably many of his own contemporaries, have been far more successful than Sir John McNeill, as far as the mere accumulation of money goes. But none we may fairly say has done better service to his country, or received higher rewards and honours. Certainly no other has filled the post of Ambassador, or received the Grand Cross of the Bath. Only one other, Joseph Hume, has attained the honour of membership of the Privy Council.

Yet, while he attained to high honours, and lived to extreme old age, Sir John's life was marked by many private sorrows. His first wife died two years after marriage, leaving one daughter, who also died in childhood. His second wife, who shared his joys and sorrows for over forty-five years, predeceased him by fourteen years. Of the five children she bore him, four died in infancy and childhood. One daughter only, the youngest, reached maturity and married; she also died twelve years before her father.

D. G. C.

II.

A FEW NOTES ABOUT MELBOURNE AND ITS HOSPITALS.

As I have recently had the great pleasure and privilege of spending some months in Melbourne visiting the Medical Institutions and seeing something of the work done in them, and as very little seems to be known by my brother-officers regarding the excellent way in which these hospitals are administered; I write this note in the hope that it may stimulate some to pay this fine city a visit, and thus combine a very pleasant and health-giving holiday with the great advantage of being able to attend the really good Surgical and Medical Cliniques which are held in splendidly equipped up-to-date hospitals.

For a man—whether layman or professional—who has three months' leave in hand, and wants a complete change of scene and occupation I know of no trip which would repay him so well as one to Australia; for as soon as he steps on board the mail boat at Colombo for Perth he has left everything Indian behind, and is thrown into the stimulating society of men and women with

absolutely different thoughts and ideas to those which surround him in his Indian life.

A great advantage of such a trip is that—by leaving in April—one is able to avoid an Indian hot weather, enjoy the magnificent winter of Australia and get back to work when the rains have fully broken; as a rule the mail boats at this season—both going and returning—are never crowded, the steamers are luxurious, and the traveller can put in seven weeks in a land full of interest and instruction for anyone to whom is given the seeing eye.

To the non-professional visitor apart from a grand winter climate, everything is present to add to the enjoyment of this stay, excellent hotels and boarding houses (or private hotels, a great feature of Australian town life) where one can reside comfortably and economically. Good music, theatres with first class companies, where plays are staged in no way inferior to London. For the horseman—flat racing and steeple-chasing second to none, for the golfist—the best of Clubs, which by the courtesy of the members one can join on temporary terms, and the man who has not played at Sandringham has yet to learn the perfection to which links are brought. While to the more thoughtful the land has much to teach. The marvellous progress that has been made in town building and planning—in trade—in railway communications on irrigation, and in public health administration within so short a span of years, fills one with wonder and amazement. The politician too is brought face to face with a comparatively new people deeply imbued with the sense of nationhood, who—while intensely loyal to the old country—are ever striving forward to the building up of that oversea nation which will take a leading place amongst the various nations and peoples who go to make up the far flung British Empire.

The hospitality of the Australian is proverbial, and I would here acknowledge many kindnesses received. I was made an Honorary Member during my stay in Melbourne of three of the leading Clubs. Nothing seemed too much trouble to friends, if it would lead to one's enjoying the visit and seeing the best of the country; and as for my professional brethren their welcome and the way in which they gave me access to the hospitals, and opportunities to see their work is one of the pleasantest memories I have carried away with me, and one which I shall never be able to forget.

Shortly after landing I met Colonel C. Ryan—often spoken of as "Plevna Ryan" having seen much service in the Russo-Turkish War. He is Inspector-General of the Medical Forces of Victoria, and Surgeon to The Melbourne Hospital, no welcome could have been kinder than his. At this time I also met Dr. Kenny, Oculist and Aurist to The St. Vincent's Hospital. He once visited some of our hospitals in Calcutta and other centres, and also saw something of the great eye-work which Lt.-Colonel H. Smith was doing at