

OBITUARY.

DEPUTY SURGEON-GENERAL GEORGE MACKAY, M.D., J.P.

By the death of Deputy Surgeon-General GEORGE MACKAY on the 20th of November, Edinburgh has to deplore the loss of one who played no minor part in the branch of medicine chosen as his rôle in life; and who, after retirement, continued to employ his time for the good of his fellow-men.

Fitly a child of the army, George Mackay was a son of Major Mackay, of H.M. 70th Regiment, then (in 1820) stationed at Aberdeen, and a grandson of Colonel Mackay of Bighouse. While still of tender years, his father's regiment was ordered to Canada. Hence he received his early education in that colony, but he was later sent to the Madras College at St. Andrews. Resolving to enter the medical profession, he entered Edinburgh University, and graduated in 1841 as M.D.

Hereditary instincts it may have been which caused him to aspire to a military career; and soon after graduating, he applied for and obtained a commission as surgeon in the Honourable East India Company's service. During the course of his duties in this capacity he saw active warfare in the campaigns against the Mahrattas in 1844, and in Burmah in 1852. The medal and clasp for Pegu were conferred on him, and he was specially thanked for his services during the campaign.

After this last war-service he settled at Coimbatore as a civil surgeon, later on proceeding to Ootacamund. Raised to the rank of Surgeon-Major in 1864, those in authority marked their appreciation of his abilities by appointing him to the post of Examiner of Medical Accounts in the Military Finance Department, an appreciation evinced further by his subsequent appointment to the Secretaryship of the Madras Medical Fund and Military Fund.

Privileged to read a record of service personally written by the late Deputy Surgeon-General, the writer is able to testify to the very varied experiences which fell to his lot, and the constant devotion to duty characterising his entire career. Among a number of points of interest, the fact of his having in 1845 had the courage to attack the then customary and universal method of treating cases of heat-apoplexy by copious bleedings and detergents—notwithstanding the almost invariable fatal result—by advocating and successfully applying a method of treatment of cold to the head, moderate stimulation, and a following purge, very similar to that adopted generally at the present time, bespeaks a man of mettle.

In India he was one of those who first advocated more thorough training of native medical subordinates, a movement leading in time to the institution of the Madras Medical College. His philanthropic turn of mind induced him to fill many honorary posts in societies formed for the public weal in India, in addition to his official work. Having served for practically thirty-three years, thirty of which on actual duty, he retired in 1875, first settling in Inverness, but latterly residing in Edinburgh. His leisure time he occupied in aiding the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, as well as many other philanthropic enterprises.