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Obituary.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM GRANT MACPHERSON,
K.C.M.G., C.B., LL.D.

THE Corps has sustained a great loss by the death of Sir William Macpherson, one of its most distinguished Colonels Commandant. He was a skilled administrator, and before the War was regarded as a great exponent of medical tactics. He was a good linguist, and translated "The Strategical and Tactical Employment of the Medical Service as carried out in an Army Corps by Maximilian, Ritter Von Hoen, of the Austro-Hungarian Army," a work which, for many years, was closely studied by officers holding administrative appointments. It is no exaggeration to say that his enthusiastic study of this subject laid the foundations of the successful medical arrangements in the late War.

As editor-in-chief of the "Medical History of the War" Sir William Macpherson had another claim to fame. He possessed just those qualities which the task demanded, and his work will always rank as a model of its kind; a history in which everything of real value has found a place, and from which everything irrelevant has been excluded. When the work was in preparation he told the contributors that its chief object was to prevent the recurrence of errors committed in the past, and should a time of testing ever arise there is little doubt that the object will be achieved.

William Grant Macpherson was born at Kilmuir, in Ross-shire, on January 28, 1857, the third son of the Rev. William Macpherson, of Kilmuir. He was educated at Fettes College, being one of the original fifty-one boys with which the school opened in 1870, under Dr. A. W. Potts. From Fettes he proceeded to Edinburgh University, where he

graduated M.A., with honours in classics, and was Greek Travelling Scholar. Taking up medicine as a profession he combined the study of classics with medicine, and obtained the degrees M.B., C.M. in 1882. Having a travelling scholarship he then proceeded to Tübingen and Leipsic, where he acquired his knowledge of German, which proved so useful to him later on in his career.

He joined the Army as a surgeon in 1883, and his first tour of service was in India. His next tour was in Gibraltar, where, having obtained the D.P.H. Cambridge, he was appointed Medical Officer of Health. While at Gibraltar he was sent in medical charge of Sir C. Euan Smith's Mission to Fez in 1892, and of Sir A. Nicholson's Mission to Morocco city in 1896; experiences which he delighted to recall.

On return from Gibraltar he joined the Staff of the Director-General at the War Office, being appointed D.A.D.G. in charge of A.M.D. 2, a department dealing with medical statistics, hospital accommodation, prevention of disease, and the preparation of the Blue Book—work for which he was peculiarly well fitted. While at the War Office he was selected to attend the sixth and seventh congresses of Red Cross Societies at Vienna and St. Petersburg respectively; he was also secretary of the Central British Red Cross Society from its foundation until 1902. He wished to proceed with the forces to South Africa, but he could not be spared from the War Office.

At the termination of his War Office appointment in 1902, he went on a mission to South Africa, and the results of his investigations are given in his "Detailed Reports on Sanitary Conditions relating to proposed Cantonments and Encampments for the Troops in South Africa."

His next tour of service was in North China, and while there he was attached for two years to the Japanese forces in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War. Here he gained invaluable experience regarding the medical administration of large forces in war, and he published his observations in a series of educative reports in the well-known volume containing the "Medical and Sanitary Reports from officers attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field." Nearly all the papers in this volume published by the General Staff of the War Office were written by Macpherson. For his services in Japan he was awarded the Japanese War Medal, the Order of the Sacred Treasure (3rd Class) and the Meritorious Service Medal of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

On his return home he was attached to the staff of the Director of Military Operations, and in this appointment he was associated with some of the most able men in the Army, gaining himself valuable knowledge of staff duties and bringing home to the staff the importance of efficient medical arrangements in the field.

In 1910 he was appointed P.M.O. in Malta, and in 1911, largely influenced by the desire to be near his son, who was serving in a Gurkha regiment, he accepted the post of A.D.M.S. of the 4th Quetta Division, and was appointed lecturer on military medical subjects at the Staff College

there from 1911 to 1914. Quetta then became a centre in which medical officers were desirous of serving in order to obtain the advantage of Macpherson's teaching.

Early in 1914 Sir Arthur Sloggett, then D.M.S. India, was appointed Director-General, Army Medical Service, and took Macpherson home with him as his Deputy Director-General. It was fortunate for the Corps that this selection had been made, for, on the outbreak of war, much of the administrative work naturally fell on Macpherson's shoulders. His previous experience in the Russo-Japanese War, his intensive study of military medical matters, and his intimate knowledge of Red Cross organization, enabled him to grapple with the many problems which had to be settled in those breathless early days of war. When for a short time Sir Arthur Sloggett was ill, Macpherson had to carry on the duties of D.G. as well as D.D.G. He had to bear the brunt of the first great rushes of wounded after the early battles, and had to organize hospitals and other accommodation almost within a night, and to find medical supplies on a gigantic scale within a few hours. From this fiery ordeal he emerged with the greatest credit.

When Sir Alfred Keogh relieved Sir Arthur Sloggett as Director-General, Macpherson at first took over the duties of adviser of the Indian Corps with his headquarters at Abbeville, but shortly afterwards he became D.M.S. of the 1st Army. While adviser to the Indian Corps, he had the great misfortune to lose his only son who was killed in action.

When D.M.S. of the 1st Army he had to make the medical arrangements for dealing with the casualties resulting from the fighting at Neuve Chapelle, the attack on Festubert and the battle of Loos. In arranging for the treatment of the wounded he was closely associated with some eminent members of the profession who held temporary rank at the Front; and more especially with the consulting surgeon of the 1st Army (Sir Cuthbert Wallace). At the battle of Loos arrangements were made for the first time for an advanced operating centre in support of the casualty clearing station. When trench foot appeared, Macpherson set himself energetically to stem the drain of men incapacitated from this cause from the Army and was very successful in his efforts.

From the 1st Army, Macpherson proceeded to Salonica as D.M.S. of the force. He completely reorganized the medical transport, as ordinary motor ambulances, wagons and cars were of little or no use for first line work in that country. He early realized the danger of malaria in the force and put forward a most comprehensive scheme for its prevention.

In March, 1916, he returned to France as D.D.G. M.S., at G.H.Q., 1st Echelon; an appointment he held until June, 1918, when he was obliged to retire, having reached the age limit.

It was as D.D.G. that he became so well known to all medical officers on the British front. Macpherson was the pivot on which everything turned, and the "Advisory consulting surgeon" has borne testimony to the smooth working of the D.M.S.'s office.

Macpherson had a leading part in the efforts which were made to develop surgery at the front. In the bringing of C.C.S.'s as near the front as possible, reinforcing them with surgical teams and improving their equipment he was one of the chief factors. He made strenuous efforts to increase the hospital accommodation in France so as to prevent the wholesale evacuation of slightly wounded and sick casualties to the United Kingdom.

He maintained close and friendly relations with the staff at G.H.Q. and with the commanders of armies, and in this way was enabled to estimate the number of casualties and to make arrangements before a battle for their reception and treatment.

For his services he received many honours and distinctions. Prior to the Great War, in addition to his Japanese decorations, he was made a Knight of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1901, was awarded the C.M.G. in 1902, and was appointed Honorary Physician to the King in 1912. During the war he was mentioned nine times in dispatches, was made a C.B. (Military), a Commander of the Legion of Honour, a Commander of the Crown of Italy (3rd Class), and a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. In 1922 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal of the United States of America. In July 1919, he received from the University of Edinburgh the honorary degree of LL.D., an honour he greatly appreciated.

After his retirement from the Army Macpherson's most important work was editing the "Medical History of the War," and it says much for his literary accomplishments and his organizing ability, that in the short space of three and a half years he brought out eleven volumes. This medical history, which has attained a very high reputation, was completed before similar histories of other combatant nations were well begun.

In addition to his literary work Macpherson was a member of the Committee on the expansion of the medical service in case of a national emergency from 1921 to 1923; of the Committee on the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, 1924 to 1926; and Chairman of the Special Committee on Tests for Drunkenness, 1926-27. On numerous occasions he also represented His Majesty's Government at the Convention of Red Cross Societies at Geneva. He also acted as official reviewer for the *JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS*.

Macpherson was a strict disciplinarian and very tenacious of his own opinions; but very accessible, good tempered and always open to argument. He had a very high sense of duty and there was nothing small in his nature. He was known as "Tiger Mac" in the Service, a tribute to his energy and efficiency. But under his courteous and rather official manner there was a kind and gentle disposition, which those associated with him soon learned to appreciate.

Though devoted to letters he was also keen on sport of all kinds. He was champion boxer and one of the best gymnasts of his year at Edinburgh

University. At Gibraltar he raced, hunted with the Calpe hounds, and played polo. While at Quetta his racing matches brought him one of his most valued trophies, a cup. In the Generals' competition of the Army Golf Meeting he was always a keen competitor, and no one was more pleased than he when the R.A.M.C. won the Army Championship Cup at St. Andrews in 1925.

He married, first Miss E. A. Clurras, daughter of Mr. J. Clurras, of New Orleans; she died in 1907. In 1910 he married Geraldine, youngest daughter of General Sir John Doran, K.C.B., of Ely House, Wexford.

The funeral service was held in the Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, on October 19, and many senior officers attended. A memorial service was also held in the chapel of the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, Millbank, on October 25th.