

assisted by massage, is regarded as a fairly new method evolved during the recent war. In reality, this method is now at least twelve years old, and was being employed by the late Dr. John B. Murphy when I visited some of the Chicago clinics in the year 1906. Dr. Murphy, in *Surgery, Gynecology, and Obstetrics* of April, 1907, wrote, in regard to complete post-operative paraplegia:

The bladder should not be catheterized; the patient should have a vaginal or proctal massage until overflowing is produced. The urine, when started, will continue to flow. If the catheter is once used, it will have to be used continually, and decomposition of urine will result, which will necessitate frequent vesical irrigation, greatly increase the labour in caring for the patient, and very materially hazard his life, as vesical and ascending renal infection is the most common cause of death after operations for injuries to the spinal cord.

—I am, etc.,

Plymouth, April 26th.

C. HAMILTON WHITEFORD.

#### DEMOBILIZED OFFICERS AND RESIDENT APPOINTMENTS.

SIR,—In October, 1914, I relinquished a resident appointment to join the army, from which I have been recently demobilized after four years' active service.

I have been applying since my return home for various junior resident appointments (hospital, etc.) similar to those I held before the war, but apparently my absence from clinical work for so long debars me from obtaining one of these posts, and I learn from other ex-army M.O.'s I meet that their experience resembles mine.

One would like to know the attitude towards such cases of the medical men on hospital staffs (especially those who are members of the British Medical Association); also the experience of medical men generally who are being demobilized after long service in the field as R.M.O.'s or field ambulance M.O.'s.

I notice advertisements of posts in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL offering salaries much below pre-war rates. Is this due to a surplus of doctors, or what are the causes at work?—I am, etc.,

May 11th.

Ex-R.M.O.

### Obituary.

JOHN MACCOMBIE, M.A., M.D.,

Late Medical Superintendent in the Metropolitan Asylums Board. DR. MACCOMBIE, late Medical Superintendent in the Metropolitan Asylums Board, died on April 24th, at the age of 68. He had retired about three years, and during the greater part of that time suffered from the trying illness which resulted in his death.

John MacCombie was the son of Mr. William MacCombie, the first editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, and was educated at the Aberdeen University. Early in his medical career he joined the service of the Metropolitan Asylums Board at the Eastern Hospital. His first appointment as medical superintendent was at the small-pox hospital at Limehouse, from which he was transferred to the South-Eastern Hospital at New Cross, where he remained for a number of years. He was chosen to advise in the construction and to take charge of the Brook Hospital, and for the last few years before his retirement was medical superintendent of the North-Western Hospital.

He was the author of the articles on small-pox and chicken-pox in Allbutt's *System of Medicine*, and was the acknowledged authority on small-pox for many years. He had great gifts as a diagnostician, and these, combined with his natural caution and observation of detail, made his opinion sought for in difficulty. To work under MacCombie was a delight, for to those he deemed worthy he freely imparted from his store of experience; no trouble was too great, no detail too small, and the points of a case were explained with a thoroughness which was impressive and characteristic. He was an accomplished lecturer on hospital administration and fevers; his style was clear, concise and simple, and he was held in high esteem by his students.

It was, however, as an administrator that John MacCombie shone above others. He was always thinking of, and discussing, how the hospital to which he was attached could be improved, down to the smallest particular, and the result is shown in the Brook Hospital,

which stands as a monument to his capacity. Even now, twenty odd years after its erection, it remains one of the finest fever hospitals in the world. There can be no doubt that he approached the ideal of the head of a hospital; always thinking how to regulate the routine, how to save his staff from falling into error, and how to make their life in his hospital as full of comfort as he could. Socially he was a charming man, devoted to his friends, a keen golfer, and gifted with a dry sense of humour. He will be sadly missed by many.

He is survived by his wife, who was his enthusiastic supporter, and two daughters. He had two sons, of whom one fell in France, and the other died in infancy.

CAPTAIN A. C. STURDY, M.C., F.R.C.S.,

Honorary Secretary, Horsham Division, British Medical Association.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR CARLILE STURDY, M.C., R.A.M.C., died of dysentery in the Colaba Military Hospital, Bombay, on May 1st, aged 36. He was the second son of the Rev. H. C. Sturdy, and was educated at St. Paul's School, Cambridge University, and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, taking the diplomas of M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P.Lond. in 1909, and the F.R.C.S. in 1912. After filling the posts of house-surgeon and intern midwifery assistant at St. Bartholomew's, and of senior resident medical officer at the Royal Free Hospital, he went into practice at Horsham, Sussex, where he was surgeon to the Horsham Cottage Hospital. He took a temporary commission as lieutenant in the R.A.M.C. in 1915, and was subsequently promoted to captain. At the time of his death Captain Sturdy was on his way home from Mesopotamia where he had been serving nearly eighteen months. He had served for two years in France, and part of the time of his service on the western front was spent as medical officer to the 2nd Hampshires, and with that regiment he gained the Military Cross on July 26th, 1917. The official record states that "he attended wounded for many hours under heavy fire. He showed a complete disregard for danger in organizing search parties, and recovered wounded who had been left for several days." Captain Sturdy was honorary secretary of the Horsham Division of the British Medical Association, in which office he did admirable work for the profession and the Association. Dr. Mark H. Vernon, chairman and acting secretary of the Horsham Division, writes: "His unexpected death after three and a half years' active service comes as a great shock to his many friends. He was a loyal and able colleague always to be relied upon, and loved and respected by all with whom he was brought in contact. His death makes a gap which it will be hard to fill."

DR. GUY BLACK, who died on April 9th, in his 43rd year, was the eldest son of Mr. James Black, late lecturer in anatomy to Westminster Hospital Medical School. He received his education at St. Paul's School and Dulwich College, and entered St. Thomas's Hospital in 1894. After taking the diplomas of M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.Lond., he graduated M.B.Lond. in 1900 and started work in Norwood and Thornton Heath. Undoubtedly he worked too long and too hard, for not until he had been in practice for eleven years did he take a holiday, and on the eve of his departure for Switzerland he poisoned his thumb, and was obliged to return to England at once, when he passed through a serious illness. As the prolonged strain had undermined his constitution, he gave up his practice and went to live at Rotherfield in Sussex to recuperate. When the war broke out he took charge of a friend's practice, working with his accustomed thoroughness and energy; the influenza epidemic added immensely to the strain, and gradually increasing anaemia and breathlessness led him to consult Sir Thomas Horder, who diagnosed gastric ulcer. He placed himself under the care of Dr. Turney and Mr. Nich at St. Thomas's, but he went downhill so rapidly that the operation, which can only be described as a forlorn hope, was unavailing. Dr. Black was a mechanic of no mean order, and there were few "jobs" in the house or garage that he could not perform as well as a skilled workman. He furnished a house he bought at Norwood with many valuable works of art, but unfortunately died before he could settle there. He leaves a