

## Obituary.

DAVID THOMPSON, J.P.,  
CORONER FOR NORTH-EAST CORNWALL.

By most members of the South-Western Branch of the British Medical Association, and by many elsewhere, the portrait on this page will be at once recognized as one of the late Dr. David Thompson, of Launceston. A personality familiar to several succeeding generations of Cornishmen, and still prominent in public affairs, his death, from almost sudden heart failure, at the end of May created, perhaps, a wider gap than would that of any other man of his age in the same division of England.

In the course of his long career he played so many parts that it is not easy to give an adequate yet brief account of his full and useful life. Born in Launceston on May 24th, 1832, he made an early start in medicine, completed his formal studies in Scotland, and in 1854, when aged 22, received the diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; in the following year he became L.S.A. Lond., and at a considerably later period took the L.R.C.S. Edin. Meantime he had returned to the West, and well before the end of the Fifties was successfully established as a medical practitioner in his own town of Launceston; hence at the time of his death he may be regarded as having devoted at least half a century to the medical and other interests of his native county.

A mere list of the dates of some of the leading events in his life gives a fair idea of the nature of his career. In 1856 he married, his wife, like himself, being Cornish born and bred, and a daughter of the late Rev. William Fookes of Liskeard. In 1860 he became Honorary Surgeon to the Launceston Volunteer Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. In 1865, and while still quite a young practitioner, he was chosen by his colleagues as President of the South-Western Branch of the British Medical Association, and later on elected a Vice-President. In 1877 he was elected Mayor of Launceston, and in 1887 he was re-elected to the same office. In 1889 he resigned the position of Alderman which had been conferred on him in recognition of his services in the municipal affairs of the locality, and in the same year succeeded the late Mr. Graham White in the office of Coroner. This post he filled until his death, as also that of Justice of the Peace, both for the Borough of Launceston and for the County of Cornwall.

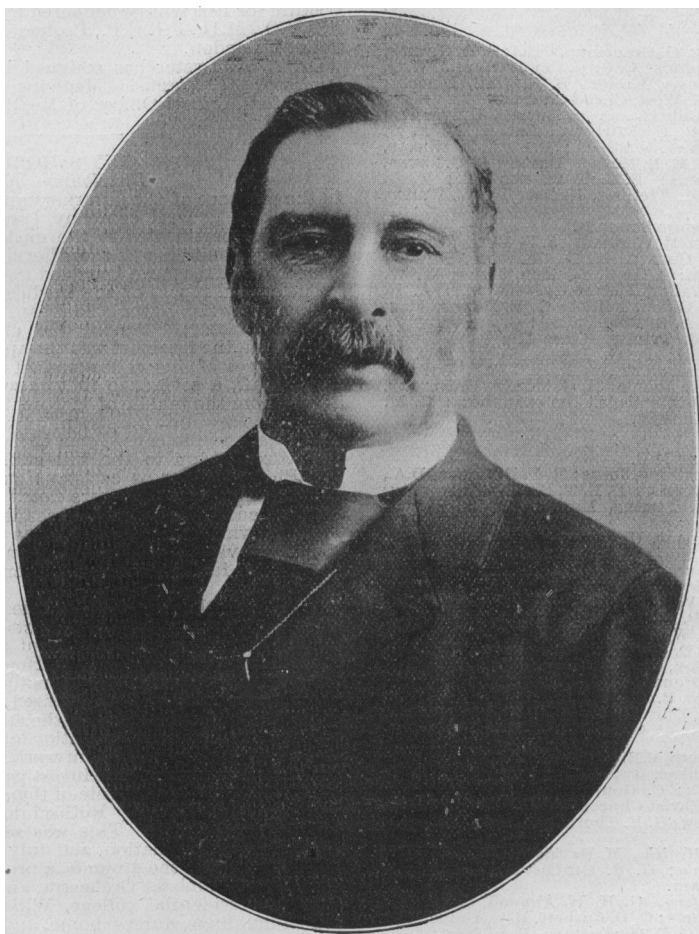
In all these various walks of life his success was marked; moreover, it was ungrudgingly admitted, for not only was he a man of singularly fine presence and attractive manners, but there was no stone which could be thrown against him either in his public or private capacity; and it was well recognized that he made the interests and activities of Cornwall his own. He was not only a friend of high and low, but an excellent guide both in private

business and public life, and in every way a man of a stamp of which the West Country could well afford to be proud. He continued to do a certain amount of medical work among the poor in an informal fashion right up to the end, but he ceded his medical position to his son and his partner at a comparatively early date. His connexion with the volunteers began before his appointment as surgeon, and continued until, having risen to the rank of Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel, and having received the volunteer decoration, it became necessary for him to retire.

His participation in municipal affairs lasted nearly twenty years, for it was not until his abilities as a councillor had been well tried that he was chosen to fill the office of Mayor—one, by the by, which had been filled by his father before him.

He was a lover of outdoor life and always encouraged the younger generation in athletic amusements, particularly football, to the adoption of which as a popular game among Cornishmen he largely contributed.

That a man of this type should have been a keen advocate of professional union it is easy to understand, and the British Medical Association owes him many recruits and something at least of its success in the West of England. The district which he administered as coroner was a large one, but he took much interest in the work, and in spite of his age carried on its duties right up to the end of his life, though subsequent to a somewhat severe illness, a few years ago, he took the precaution of securing a deputy in the person of his son, Dr. W. F. Thompson. For work of a judicial character he was singularly well fitted. He was a constant attendant at both the borough and county magisterial courts, and was regarded as an exceedingly fair and clear-minded representative of justice. The fact is that he had both a wide knowledge of human nature and a clear insight into



Photograph by]

DR. DAVID THOMPSON, J.P.

[Brimmell.

character and the courage of his opinions; hence he was never afraid, on the one hand, to temper justice with mercy, or, on the other, to award a comparatively severe sentence if in the long run it seemed most likely to pull up the offender sharply and lead him to change his ways.

His funeral took place on the Monday following his death, being attended by a concourse representative of the whole countryside as well as by members of the various bodies with which he had been more closely connected, including the mayor and corporation, many of the borough and county magistrates, and the Dunheved Lodge of Freemasons, of which he was a past master, and many medical men and clergy. On the previous day allusion to what he had done for Launceston was made in several places of worship, and resolutions of regret at his loss passed by the Launceston Board of Guardians, by the Launceston Borough Bench, and by the magistrates of the county bench, and the solicitors practising in that court.

Dr. Thompson celebrated his golden wedding two years ago and is survived by his wife, one son, and two daughters.