

GENERAL SIR JAMES EDWARD ALEXANDER, Kt.,
C.B., K.C.L.S., &c.

General Sir James Edward Alexander, of Westerton, Stirling-shire, who was born in Stirling on the 16th October 1803, and whose decease took place at the Isle of Wight 2nd April 1885, was a collateral descendant of the family of the first Baronet, William Alexander of Menstrie, afterwards Earl of Stirling.*

After passing through the College of Edinburgh and Glasgow, he proceeded at an early age to India to join his relative Sir Thomas Munro, then governor of Madras. He there devoted himself to the study of Oriental languages, passed the required examinations, and was appointed to the Madras Light Cavalry, and adjutant of the governor's body guard. He was afterwards transferred to the 13th Light Dragoons in January 1825, and volunteering for active service proceeded to Burmah, was present in the field, and took part in the first Burmah war.

After the peace his acquirements were recognised by his being appointed attaché to the Persian Mission, under Sir John Macdonald Kinneir; while acting with the Persian army on the field against the Russians, he so distinguished himself that he received the Order of the Lion and Sun.

In consequence of his proficiency in Eastern languages and general attainments, he was offered, on return to England, a professorship at the College of Heylebury, but, declining this employment, he instead joined the senior department of the Military Staff College, obtained a first-class certificate, and shortly afterwards was promoted to a lieutenantancy in the 16th Lancers. He then obtained a year's leave of absence, to enable him to complete his military studies, and to join the Royal Engineers at Chatham, under Sir Charles Paisley.

He next saw service with the Russian army of Field-Marshal Diebitch, then engaged in operations against the Turks. At the conclusion of this service, and while on his return to England, a slightly untoward incident occurred to him. Proceeding in a Russian frigate by way of Sebastopol, he was there placed in quarantine, in consequence of some cases of the plague having

* He was buried in the old Logie kirkyard, near Menstrie.

appeared on board. The port chanced to be visited at the time by H.M.S. "Blonde," commanded by Captain, afterwards Sir Edmund and Lord Lyons (commander-in-chief of the fleet during the Crimean war), then cruising in the Black Sea. Captain Lyons alone was allowed to land at the quarantine station, when he naturally communicated with his fellow-countryman. On the departure of the "Blonde," Sir James Alexander was immediately arrested by the Russian authorities, on suspicion of being an emissary of the British Government. He was arbitrarily confined two months in Sebastopol with other prisoners, and finally, in the depth of winter, sent under guard to St Petersburg, where, after undergoing further confinement and hard treatment, he was at length, by the intervention of the British ambassador, released, but without compensation for the unjust usage he had received—only a slight apology from the Emperor Nicholas in person.

He returned to England by Sweden and Denmark, and in recognition of the valuable information, plans, and reports he was enabled to furnish with regard to Russia and Turkey, he was promoted to an unattached captaincy.

Sir James was now selected by the Colonial Office to undertake an important commission of inquiry into the state of slavery in North and South America, receiving from the Secretary of State letters and credentials to the various governors of provinces, &c. On the conclusion of this mission he was examined before a committee of the House of Lords, by whom his able report was highly appreciated.

He shortly afterwards returned to full pay, and joined as a captain the 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch). While serving with this regiment, he was invited by the Royal Geographical Society to make explorations in Africa, and readily accepted a duty so congenial to his active and enterprising character; but the British expedition then being in the field against Don Miguel, he took the opportunity it afforded him of seeing further active service and acquiring further geographical knowledge by joining the expeditionary force. His effective service was rewarded by receiving from Don Pedro the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He then proceeded on his mission in H.M.S. "Thalia" round the west coast of Africa, visiting the different settlements.

On arrival at the Cape, finding the war with the Caffres already commenced, and the time accordingly unfavourable for explorations, he joined the troops in the field under Sir Benjamin D'Urban, by whom he was appointed aide-de-camp. At the conclusion of the war, Sir James Alexander resumed his mission of exploration, and proceeded into the interior, accompanied only by seven men—encountering successfully the dangers, difficulties, and hardships to which at that time travellers in South Africa were subjected. In one year he accomplished 4000 miles, and completed a full report of the countries of the great Namaquas, Boshmans, and Hill Damaras.

On returning to England, Sir James E. Alexander received the honour of knighthood for his services in Africa, being the first knight created by the Queen in person after Her Majesty's accession. His African duties had obliged him to go temporarily on half pay; but he returned shortly to full pay as a captain in the 14th Regiment, then serving in North America. There he was asked to undertake and accepted the arduous duty of exploring and surveying in the construction of a military road through the forests of New Brunswick and Canada from Quebec to Halifax, acting as assistant royal engineer on this most trying service during 1844–45. He received no promotion or reward, beyond a slight addition to pay while so engaged, for this arduous service which he had been invited to undertake.

On Sir Benjamin D'Urban being appointed commander of the forces in Canada, he immediately reappointed Sir James as his aide-de-camp, a post he retained until Sir Benjamin's death in Montreal. Sir William Rowen succeeding to the command, he was again offered the aide-de-campship, and served on the staff of that distinguished officer for $5\frac{1}{2}$ years. He rejoined his regiment as major on the breaking out of the Crimean war, shortly became lieutenant-colonel, and succeeded to its command during the siege of Sebastopol, at the fall of which stronghold he was present.

During this time of scarcity and hardship, his regiment was notorious for the beneficial arrangements for their supply and comfort that his previous experience on active service had enabled him to make for the comfort and welfare of his men.

Sir James Alexander was next appointed to the command of a

dépôt battalion, but was shortly selected to raise the 2nd battalion of his old regiment, the 14th ; this he so quickly did, and so rapidly brought them into an effective state, that his battalion was the first of the new 2nd battalions that proceeded on service in the field ; this was to New Zealand, to engage in the Maori war. Here he commanded for some time in the province of Taranaki, and under Sir Duncan Cameron the important outposts at Waikato.

He was then promoted to major-general in 1868, lieut.-general in 1877, and general in 1881. He received during his service seven war medals, but the reception only of the C.B. (3rd Class of the Order of the Bath) will be considered but an inadequate acknowledgment of long and arduous service.

Sir James Alexander was the author of various works of travel and of a biographical and military character, such as his *Life of the Duke of Wellington, Canada as it is, &c., Passages in the Life of a Soldier*, and others relating to the various countries with which he was personally acquainted, as well as the contributor of numerous articles in periodicals on the military, scientific, and social topics of the day.

The deep interest he took in all questions relating to the interests and improvements of the army, especially as regarded its equipments, and his untiring exertions in promoting these objects to the utmost of his power, are well known. He was among the foremost and most strenuous supporters of those who called public attention to the long-neglected justice of granting medals for the Peninsular services of the army, hitherto unrecognised by distinctive decorations. This movement was eventually carried to a successful result, through the influence and advocacy of the Duke of Richmond in the House of Lords, and with the military authorities, was much indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Sir James Alexander.

Mainly also to his exertions may be truly attributed the ultimate erection of the Egyptian obelisk (called Cleopatra's Needle) in its present site on the Thames Embankment. This obelisk, presented by Egypt to England in recognition of the services of the British army in Egypt under Abercrombie, owing to untoward circumstances which prevented its shipment to England, for which arrangements had been made at the expense of the army, was allowed from that up to the present to lie neglected on the shore of Alexandria

harbour, at the point intended as that of embarkation; and the English Government having refused to incur the expense of its removal, it would finally have been broken up in 1874, had not Sir James Alexander, who had long endeavoured to call public attention to the matter, personally interfered, and undertaken at his own expense a voyage to Alexandria, and, with the aid of the British consul-general, succeeded in rescuing it from destruction. On his return he renewed his exertions, so many years unsuccessful, and obtained the munificent pecuniary assistance of Sir Erasmus Wilson, by which after great difficulties the obelisk was transported to England and erected in its present site. The country must be considered indebted to Sir James Alexander's persevering energy for its possession of this most valuable and interesting antiquity.

It would be difficult to enumerate the various other works of public and private character, whether in England or abroad, in which he was constantly engaged, and bore a leading and prominent part; these will long be gratefully remembered by those who benefited by his exertions.

Of him may truly be said, that in all countries whatever good work he found at his hand to do that he did with heart and soul; and in him those who had the privilege of his acquaintance recognised that highest type of character, the single-hearted, high-minded Christian gentleman, whose life was devoted to duty and to the promotion of the interest and welfare of his fellow countrymen, and the communities among whom his lot might be more immediately cast.

ALEXANDER JAMES RUSSELL, C.S.

Mr Alexander James Russell, Clerk to Her Majesty's Signet, Edinburgh, who died recently—8th January 1887—at the age of seventy-two, was head of the firm known formerly as Russell & Nicolson, C.S., and latterly as Russell & Dunlop, and the business which he carried on was one of the oldest in Edinburgh, dating back to the end of the seventeenth century, and having descended in the direct line from father to son.

His father, Mr John Russell, was principal Clerk of Session, and