

Memoir of James Burnes, K.H., F.R.S., &c.; &c.; &c.; : physician-general, Bombay Army : compiled from the recent Indian periodicals / compiled by W. A. Laurie.

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Laurie (William Alexander)

MEMOIR

or

PREFACE

JAMES BURNES, K. H., F. R. S.,

As Dr Burnes, after receiving high honours from the Government, and Society at large in India, is now on his return to his Native Land, where much cordiality and kind regards await him, it has occurred to me that a brief Record of his distinguished career of Public Service, extracted from the Indian Physician-General, Bombay Army, within reach of his numerous friends and well-wishers. I have therefore had the pleasure of compiling the following sketch, which I offer for their perusal; merely observing, that it is an abridgment chiefly of the Memoirs published on the same subject by Drs Grant of

Calcutta.

W. A. L.

Edinburgh, March 25, 1830.

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MEMOIR

PREFACE.

As Dr BURNES, after receiving high honours from the Government, and Society at large in India, is now on his return to his Native Land, where much cordiality and kindness await him, it has occurred to me that a brief Record of his distinguished career of Public Service, extracted from the Indian Periodicals which are not generally within reach, would not prove unacceptable to his numerous friends and well-wishers. I have therefore had the pleasure of compiling the following Sketch, which I offer for their perusal ; merely observing, that it is an abridgment chiefly of the Memoirs published on the same subject by Drs Grant of Calcutta, and Buist of Bombay.

W. A. L.

EDINBURGH, March 25, 1850.

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Goosert and the Indus. In 1831, Sir Alexander commenced his travels through the Punjab to Cabool, through Afghanistan and Bokhara to the Court of Persia,—travels, as remarked by the illustrious Humboldt, a train of light through the most obscure portion of Asia. In 1837 he was despatched to Cabool on a mission, which was speedily transformed into a war. He here, for many months, laboured with untiring zeal and assiduity to avert the misunderstanding betwixt the Amers and the British.

MEMOIR.

FEW men quit India carrying with them so large a measure of respect, of affection so warm and unmingled, and regret so sincere, as our late Physician-General, DR JAMES BURNES, who, after a period of twenty-eight years' service, this day takes a final leave of India, bears along with him

Dr Burnes is the son of a gentleman well known in Scotland as a late Provost of Montrose, and an active Magistrate of the county of Forfar. His great-grandfather, a Town-Councillor of the same burgh, was elder brother of William Burnes, the father of Scotland's immortal Poet; and his grandfather was the relation to whom the unfortunate Bard, on his death-bed, appealed for pecuniary relief. It is very affecting to read that brief but emphatic appeal of a proud and noble, but broken heart; and it is most consolatory to know that it was promptly, generously, yet delicately responded to by his kinsman, though himself struggling with adverse fortune.¹

Dr Burnes arrived at Bombay in the Company's Service, with his brother, the late Sir Alexander, on the 31st October 1821. The brilliancy of the progress, and tragie nature of the close of the career of Sir Alexander are well known. Having become, almost immediately on his arrival, distinguished for his aptitude in the acquisition of languages,—for his enterprise, industry, and zeal in the pursuit of general knowledge—he was permitted by Government to travel through the then almost unknown countries on the Bombay N.W. frontier; and the result, in conjunction with his fellow-traveller, Lieutenant, now Major James Holland, was the earliest account ever drawn up of the southernmost of the Rajpootana States, and the vast dreary tract betwixt

¹ Cunningham's Life of Burns, Vol. VII.

Goozerat and the Indus. In 1831, Sir Alexander commenced his travels through the Punjaub to Cabool, through Affghanistan and Bokhara to the Court of Persia,—tracing, as remarked by the illustrious Humboldt, a train of light through the most obscure portion of Asia.¹ In 1837 he was despatched to Cabool on a commercial, which was speedily transformed into a political mission. He here, for many months, laboured with untired zeal and assiduity to avert the misunderstanding betwixt the Ameer and the British Government, which ended in the Affghan war. He was invested with the Order of the Bath, and raised to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by Brevet, and accompanied Lord Keane's army in the expedition of 1839, which ended in the deposition of Dost Mahomed. He remained as Political Agent at Cabool along with Sir W. Macnaghten, and repeatedly predicted the approach of the catastrophe which proved fatal to him and so many of his countrymen. He was amongst the first who fell in the Ghilzie insurrection in November 1841; his younger brother, Lieutenant Charles Burnes, perishing along with him.²

The early career of Dr Burnes can be traced from an official report drawn up under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief at Bombay, which was subsequently submitted to the late King. After having been successively attached to the Artillery at Matoonga; the Convalescent Hospital at Severndroog; the 5th Regiment Madras Native Infantry at Malligaum—the three previous

¹ It was the Asiatic Society of Paris which addressed Sir Alexander Burnes in the remarkable words: "Vous avez tracé sur la portion le plus obscure de l'Asie une ligne lumineuse." Baron Humboldt pronounced him "le premier des voyageurs;" and his journey into Bokhara, "l'immense et courageux voyage;" at the same time that the Geographical Societies of France and England each awarded him their Medal for Great Geographical Discoveries.—W. A. L.

² "Comment ne pas envier à l'Angleterre ces agens intrépides qu'elle trouve toujours prêts à se dévouer à son service? le mérite est d'autant plus grand, que le sort qui les attend dans ces périlleuses entreprises ne saurait être douteux. Pour un Alexandre Burnes, dont le nom se répand dans tout le monde civilisé, combien de victimes de ce patriotisme tombent obscurément, disparaissant sans laisser plus de traces que la paille que le vent emporte dans l'abîme! Ces dévouements sont sublimes; ils méritent d'être signalés à la juste admiration des peuples."—Revue de Paris, Octobre 1844.

Medical Officers of which had died of Cholera; and the 24th Regiment Bombay N. I. at Bassadore; he was posted in February 1823, to the 18th Regiment N. I. stationed at Bombay, where he was also selected to superintend the Institution for the check of Cholera. In 1824, the honourable appointment of Surgeon to the Residency in Cutch having been offered by Mr Elphinstone for competition, as a reward to Medical Officers who would pass in the native language, Dr Burnes was the one of five candidates who was successful. On his quitting the 18th Regiment, we find him commended in Orders for "his professional abilities, humanity, and feeling towards his sick, and his constant and unwearied attention to his duties."¹

In 1825, he accompanied, as a volunteer, the field force and detachments which expelled the Scindians and other plunderers who had invaded and devastated Cutch, forcing the British Brigade to retire to the Hill-fort of Bhooj. In 1827, the Ameers of Scinde, between whom and our Government a very uncordial feeling had subsisted for years, unexpectedly solicited his services, and sent an envoy to invite him to their Capital, where he remained some months under circumstances which will be best explained by the following extract of an official dispatch from the Resident in Cutch, Sir Henry Pottinger, to Government, (Political Department, No. 19 of 1828). "The Honourable the Governor-in-Council will perceive that Mr Burnes was only finally allowed by the Ameers of Scinde to come away, under a promise of his early return; and although the unsettled state of that country has since led to their Highnesses requesting him to postpone his visit; yet, from the terms in which they speak of Dr Burnes, (who, they say, is not only the most skilful of all Physicians, but their best friend, and the cementer of the bonds of amity between the two Governments,) it is pretty certain they will again invite him to their Court." * * * It is due to their Highnesses to mention that they have treated Mr Burnes, during his sojourn at Hyderabad, with the most marked distinction and kindness, both as a professional gentleman to whom they were indebted for advice, and as an Officer of the British Government deputed in that capacity, at their special request. In

¹ Regimental Order, Nov. 18, 1824.

the latter light they received him, on his first arrival, in a State Durbar with every honour and formality, and afterwards made him welcome at all times, with a degree of cordiality and politeness which, as the Native Agent justly observes in his letter to me, "they have never before evinced towards any gentleman."

The Government sanctioned Dr Burnes's acceptance of liberal presents from the Ameers, and also presented to him a handsome pecuniary donation on his return to Bhooj. He was also complimented, in strong terms, on the zeal and ability he had displayed at Hyderabad, and received the thanks of the Government for the highly interesting narrative of his visit, which, under the orders of the Resident in Cutch, he had submitted for its information.¹ The Governor personally intimated, that but for the good use he had made of his time, much that was important would have remained unknown and unnoticed; The Commander-in-Chief pronounced the narrative a most valuable addition to the geography of India; and the Government of Bombay directed it to be presented to the Royal Asiatic Society through Sir John Malcolm; circulated to public servants; and printed at the expense of the State. The narrative of a visit to Scinde drew from the Geographical Society of France a declaration that Dr Burnes had deserved well of Geography.² It was published in England in 1830, and has gone through successive editions both in India and in Europe, being the best account of the country we yet possess.

Dr Burnes's invitation by the Ameers, and his visit to their Court, were evidently the first link in the chain of those great events which have since taken place in reference to the Indus, and it is not at all improbable that had the request of those Rulers to retain him, which has been referred to in the official dispatch above quoted, been complied with, much of the trouble and expense which have

¹ Government Letter, Political Department, No. 1322, Nov. 17, 1828.

² M. Alexandre Burnes, Lieutenant d'Infanterie de la compagnie Anglaise des Indes, est frère de M. James Burnes, Chirurgien-major à Bhoudj dans le Cotch. Ce dernier fut appelé en 1827, à Haiderabad, pour donner ses soins, à un des Emirs. Il a publié une relation de son voyage. Ainsi les deux frères ont bien mérité de la géographie, en nous donnant des détails sur des pays peu connus." Bulletin of the Geographical Society of France, 1833.

since been incurred, might have been spared. But it did not suit the policy of the day, and it was not till two years afterwards that his brother was deputed again to open a negotiation with the Ameers, and to ascend the Indus. Those who are familiar with that Officer's Travels will recollect that the Ameers stated that he was doubly welcome as the brother of Dr James Burnes. Sir Alexander Burnes's visit was followed by Sir Henry Pottinger's Embassy in 1832-3, for the purpose of demanding the free navigation of the Indus to British merchants, and the great events to the West, with which we are familiar. In 1829, Dr Burnes married Sophia, daughter of the late Major-General Sir George Holmes, K. C. B.

In 1830, the same reputation in the North-West frontier, which had induced the Ameers of Scinde to invite and welcome Dr Burnes to their capital, led to the Cutch Regency bringing his conduct and services specially to the notice of Government, with a request that they might have the power to remunerate them. He had now been nearly five years in that lately conquered and distracted country; and such was the feeling towards him, that the Resident reported, in the words of the Cutch Government, that "there was no one of any class or rank who would not, if sick, reckon upon his services at midnight."¹ The reply of the Bombay Government (Political Department, No. 427 of 1830,) is in the following terms:—"The Governor-in-Council directs me to signify to you his concurrence in the proposal of the Durbar to remunerate the professional services of Dr Burnes, and requests that, in making this communication to the Durbar, you will suggest the mode in which the object in view can be effected with most attention to the feelings of the Prince and his family, and to those of Mr Burnes, whose kind and unwearied attention, which the Honourable the Governor (Sir John Malcolm) has had full opportunity of learning, has, the Governor-in-Council is aware, created the most lively sentiments of gratitude, while it has established, in the strongest manner, his claims to the approbation of Government."

Nearly of the same date is a Government letter to the

¹ Letter to Government, Political Department, January 27, 1830.

Resident at Bhooj, acknowledging Dr Burnes's History of Cutch, which has since been published, along with his Narrative, and may be found in a compressed form in the last edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, in the following words, (Political Department, No. 526 of 1830):— "I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 29th March, with a copy of one from Dr Burnes, and to request that you will convey to that Officer the thanks of Government for the valuable Sketch of the recent History of Cutch which accompanied it. You will also be pleased to express to Dr Burnes the real satisfaction with which Government observes public Officers devote their leisure to such objects of useful research, and to acquaint him that his clear and concise account of Cutch will be brought to the notice of the Honourable the Court of Directors."

In December 1831, we find Sir Henry Pottinger, on his departure as Envoy to Scinde, reporting to Government that, "in consideration of the long connection which has subsisted between Dr Burnes and himself, he will be excused for bearing testimony to his merits and claims, and strongly recommending him to favourable notice;"¹ and in April following, there is a dispatch from the new Resident, Colonel Bagnold, which acknowledges that "in conducting the important duties of the frontier," he has "derived the most valuable assistance from his exertions, talents, and information, afforded by him gratuitously and to the benefit of the public service, in a department distinct from his own, and consequently the more highly to be appreciated."² At the end of the same year Dr Burnes's services were again brought to notice as having, in the political department, "amply evinced the greatest zeal and ability for the public service."³ Other quotations might be made from the paper we have referred to, but enough has been given to satisfy the reader that Dr Burnes's services were neither few nor unacknowledged by his superiors.

In October 1833, Dr Burnes was forced to quit Cutch, on sick certificate, after having struggled with the fever of the country for many years. In February following he embark-

¹ Letter to Government, Political Department, No. 22, Dec. 28, 1831.

² Letter to Adjutant-General, April 17, 1832.

³ Letter to Government, Political Department, No. 123, Sept. 27, 1832.

ed for Europe by the over-land route, and an interesting account of the journey, at that time attended with some difficulty, extracted from his letters, was published in the Bombay Newspapers. He took the route of Malta, Sicily, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, Geneva, and Paris. While at home, amongst other honours conferred on him, he was created a Doctor of Laws by the University of Glasgow, and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, and of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. He was also presented at Court by his friend the late Earl of Dalhousie, who had then returned from the command of the army in India, and received the honour of the Guelphic Knighthood from the Sovereign.

On returning subsequently to Edinburgh to make preparations for his departure to India, a public entertainment was given to Dr Burnes, Lord Ramsay¹ in the chair, at which a magnificent silver vase was presented to him, bearing, besides a masonic inscription, an intimation that it was a token of "regard and esteem for him as a gentleman." The Committee for the presentation of the vase, consisted of the present Marquis of Dalhousie, Admiral Sir David Milne, G.C.B., Sir George Ballingall, Professor of Military Surgery in the University, the late Sir Reginald Maedonald Seton, better known as the hospitable "Staffa," and other eminent individuals. Before quitting Edinburgh, Dr Burnes devoted a few leisure hours to his Sketch of the History of the Knights Templars, having been encouraged to undertake the Work by offers of valuable documents in the possession of old and noble families, and especially requested to leave amongst his friends some such token of remembrance. The book was brought out in a very elegant form; but only a few copies, besides those for distribution amongst private friends, were printed. It contains illustrations of the curious fact mentioned in Mills's Chivalry, that the Order of the Templars has descended to our own days; and traces the history of these Knights, and of those of St John of Jerusalem, in Scotland. A great portion of Dr Burnes's stay in Europe was devoted to visiting the countries on the Continent, and we believe that he has seen and communi-

¹ The present Governor-General of India.

cated with more of the eminent men of the present day than any other individual from India.

On the 24th December 1837, he returned to Bombay; and Sir James Carnac conferred on him, unsolicited, the first vacant medical staff appointment in his gift, namely, the Garrison Surgeoney of Bombay. Before the lapse of a year we find his Masonic Brethren voting him “three massive silver pillars, surmounted by the emblems of Faith, Hope, and Charity, to mark their deep-felt gratitude for his conduct to themselves, and their high sense of his brilliant efforts in the cause of *charity, friendship, and love to all men.*”

In 1840, Dr Burnes paid a visit to Calcutta, the exciting events of which will appear from the following three paragraphs of Dr Grant's Memoir, published at that time, which we give unabridged:—

“The reception of the Provincial Grand Master of Bombay by his ‘brethren of the mystic tie’ in Calcutta, has been worthy of him and of them; and it was decided, with genuine hospitality, and brotherly alacrity, to get up a round of Masonic banquets, to mark how welcome was his arrival among the fraternity in Bengal. It were difficult to say which of these entertainments was the most delightful, or at which the eloquence of the distinguished visitor shone with greater lustre—and if we mention the banquet at which Dr Burnes was entertained by the officers of the Grand Lodge, as one that was remarkable for a brilliant reception, a noble flow of the kindest and most happily expressed feelings, it is more from its Masonic rank claiming priority of title to mention, that we allude to it, than from any other circumstance. The occasion too was remarkable, as being the first in India on which a Grand Master of the Province had the opportunity and gratification of officially welcoming his brother, a colleague of a sister Province; to say nothing of the friendship existing between the parties, which greatly enhanced the zest of the scene.

“Dr Burnes has seen much of the world, and his manners and conversation at once give the impression of one who had observed well and benefitted by what he had seen and learned; being pleasing, winning, and of a reflective cast. It has been truly said of old, that a good countenance is a perpetual letter of recommendation; and no one who has once

seen Dr Burnes can deny that he bears this enviable missive with him wherever he goes. A family resemblance may be traced in features and occasional turns of expression and manners, between himself and his distinguished brother Sir Alexander, but there are, nevertheless, characteristic points of difference. Sir Alexander, when we had the pleasure of seeing him, looked spare and thin compared with his brother, not that Dr Burnes is exactly anything approaching to a 'stout gentleman,' but he has less of angularity of feature and frame than the enterprising traveller and keen politician. The one is sharp, quick, and rapidly decisive, expressive, and penetrating. The other, though full of energy in any matter he engages in, is more subdued in manner and expression, and his bearing more fraught with amenity. Sir Alexander for instance, in an argument, uses a sword-like logic that he thrusts at once, and with a masculine hand, to the point. The argumentative weapon of the other too, is 'of the ice-brook's temper,' and of perfect point and polish, but is like that of Harmodius wreathed with flowers. Both have a marked frankness of address. "That Dr Burnes is a person of singularly attractive manners and disposition, no one who has ever enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance can question for an instant, and a more triumphant proof of this cannot be appealed to than the warmth of his reception by not only the Masonic body of Calcutta, but society at large, so far as he could become known to it during his short stay among us. It has appeared to us, that a portion of this attractiveness is hereditary; for the full dark eye, the well arched brow, expressive mouth, and in a word the whole countenance, when lighted up in the brilliance of congenial social intercourse, have often reminded us of the best portraits, graphic and biographic, of his great kinsman the Poet. In regard to his popularity with the Craft, this is not the place to dilate on that head, more especially since the public prints have already made the community somewhat conversant with the subject. The two leading reasons of this popularity, are his perfect knowledge of the forms and institutes of Masonry, and the affectionate cordiality with which, in those forms and institutes, he embraces the *whole* Craft, high and low. This will be understood by the initiated; it would therefore be

impertinent to dilate upon it. Indeed, it is possible that Dr Burnes's connection with Masonry has been so prominently brought forward as to give those at a distance from Calcutta, the notion that Masonry is the chief plume in his cap—the crest and chief quartering of his shield. Nothing can be a greater mistake. Masonry is only as it were a tongue through which he, in hours of leisure and relaxation, has become known and cherished by a certain class, embracing in itself men of all ranks and grades. But he speaketh other languages—or, in other words, his business hours lie in other tracks, where the philosophic observer, the shrewd statist, and the calm, looking-forward politico-economist, may meet also what the Mason hails, a well instructed, highly qualified *brother of the Craft*.”

Dr Burnes returned from Calcutta early in 1841, having been requested by Sir James Carnac, then Governor of Bombay, to undertake the office of Secretary to the Medical Board, a post in which it was thought he would be able to afford much benefit to his own department. In that year he presided at the St Andrew's dinner; but, owing to the deplorable Cabool catastrophe, in which his brothers lost their lives, he remained for some time afterwards in retirement. His next prominent appearance was on the occasion of his laying the foundation-stone of the Jamsjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital, which ceremony created a great sensation at Bombay in January 1843. In December 1844, he established the Lodge “Rising Star,” for the admission of natives, and a beautiful medal, cut by Wyon, was struck by them in consequence. In August 1844, he presided at the dinner given to Sir Henry Pottinger. In July 1846, he was promoted to be Superintending Surgeon, and a piece of plate was voted to him by his brother Officers, “in manifestation of their esteem, and the sense they entertain of his accelerating promotion, and of the uniform urbanity which he, in his official position, evinced on all occasions in his intercourse with all ranks.” On quitting the Medical Board Office, the Board brought to the notice of Government the “distinguished zeal and ability” with which he had performed his duty for 5½ years, and in handing up this testimonial, the Commander-in-Chief added from himself, that “for

several years he had had constant opportunities of having officially under his own notice the untiring zeal and great ability with which Dr Burnes performed his varied duties in the most stirring times ever known at this Presidency in the Medical Branch, and in all the Military Departments,"¹ The Board at the same time recorded the following Departmental Minute :

"Bombay, July 24th, 1846. The Medical Board cannot permit Dr Burnes to retire from the appointment of Secretary, without placing upon record the high sense they entertain of his valuable services during a period of 5½ years, at a time when the pressure of the public service required an unusual degree of ability, energy, and zeal, to carry out the important duties connected with the office, and which were performed by Dr Burnes greatly to the satisfaction of the Medical Board, and to the interests of the service, and of the community at large. The Board beg to assure Dr Burnes that he carries with him their best wishes for his future welfare and advancement."

In February 1847, Dr Burnes was transferred to the Poona Division, where he remained until his promotion to the Medical Board in September 1848. Shortly after his arrival at Bombay he was appointed a Member of the Board of Education, and the interest he took in its business is best shown by his Addresses at the Grant College; by his successful efforts for the student apprentices; and by the Board having, on his departure, recorded "its deep regret at the loss of his valuable services, particularly in the department of Native Medical Education, to which he has devoted so much attention, and wherein his rare talents and extensive experience have enabled him to act with such marked efficiency;" a regret in which the Government expressed its entire participation.² The Medical Board also intimated to Government their deep regret that ill health was about to deprive the Medical Service of an officer who had been "so long its pride and ornament, and of whose honour-

¹ Adjutant-General's Letter to Government, Military Department, No. 914, August 4, 1846.

² Education Board's Letter to Government, No. 727, and Government Reply, No. 4008, dated respectively the 16th and 30th November 1849.

able career and eminent merits, the Public Records bore such ample testimony."¹

Dr Burnes has always been a zealous promoter of Freemasonry, and for above twelve years has been Grand Master for Western India. On his departure, the brethren of the various Lodges subscribed for the perpetual endowment of medals for the reward of eminence and scholarship at the following seminaries:—The Byculla Schools, and the Grant Medical College, Bombay, in the latter of which he, as the highest medical officer of the Presidency, took an especial interest; and the Academy of his native town, Montröse, where he himself was educated.² He was one of

¹ Medical Board's Letter to Government, No. 1674, November 15, 1849.

² The Valedictory Masonic Honours voted by the various Lodges of Western India, would fill a considerable volume. We cannot, therefore, enter upon them, further than by giving the following short account by Dr Buist of the *general* meeting of the Brotherhood. "It had only just become known that Dr Burnes was to leave—when there was scarcely time to summon a meeting of his Masonic friends—when, at the busiest hour of the day, on the eve of the departure of the overland mail, sixty European gentlemen were found to assemble, at once to determine on the most fitting mode of marking their sense of his merits. So little was the object of their homage aware of what was intended for him, that the meeting had to wait for a good half hour until he arrived in the Fort from his residence. The idea of the establishment of medals is a pre-eminently happy one. Nothing is more gratifying to an ingenuous man than to have the respect and esteem enjoyed by him in a distant land made known by some enduring memorial in the place of his nativity, or transmitted to distant times through the rising generation, on the spot where it was earned. Both ends will be answered by the Burnes Medal—it will be carried away at Montröse by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who yet remember its object as a school-fellow—and at Bombay it will keep alive the memory of a benevolent and much-loved gentleman amongst the offspring of those who know how to appreciate his merits.

"The following Resolutions were *carried by acclamation* by the assembled Brethren:—

"That it is with the deepest feeling of heartfelt sorrow that the Brethren have learned that they are to be deprived of the presence and countenance of their R. W. P. G. M. Br. Burnes, K. H., F. R. S., in consequence of his returning to Europe, owing to the impaired state of his health, which will close a personal connection between him and them, which has been maintained with unbroken kindness and the most affectionate regard during a period of nearly twelve years.

"That the whole of the Members of the Craft at Bombay be assembled for the purpose of doing all honour, in the shape of a Masonic Festival, that is possible to our beloved and respected P. G. M., before his departure, and of uniting in wishing him all happiness and prosperity.

the trustees of the Oriental Bank, and a warm promoter of the schemes for the promotion and encouragement of the arts and manufactures, in an improved form, among the natives. He was also President of the Medical and Physical Society, and Vice-President of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and the feelings of those Institutions towards him will be best estimated by a perusal of the following Resolutions unanimously passed by them on his departure:—

“That the members of the Medical and Physical Society of Bombay in accepting, with unfeigned regret, the resignation by Dr Burnes of the office of President, gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of placing on their records an expression of the deep sense which they entertain of the many and great advantages conferred on the Society by

“That as a token to all men and Brethren, both here and in our Native Land, of the affection, gratitude, and regard we entertain towards our R. W. Br., and of the appreciation in which we hold his brilliant achievements in the cause of charity and love to all men, 4 Medals be founded by us for the encouragement of good conduct and learning in youth, to be awarded yearly to the most accomplished pupils in the following Schools:

“1st. At the Grant Medical College, Bombay, to the best Student Apprentice, as recommended by the Board of Education.

“2d. At the Schools of the Bombay Education Society at Byculla, to the best pupil in the Boys' and Girls' School (1 medal each), as nominated by the Committee of Management.

“3d. At the Academy at Montrose in Scotland, where the R. W. Br. Burnes himself was educated, to the best boy nominated by the R. W. himself, his heirs or successors.

“That in order to mark still further their high sense of the merits and services of this accomplished and gifted Mason, the Brethren do escort him in Masonic Order, from the Town Hall to the Apollo Bunder, the place of embarkation; and that all Members of the Craft, of whatever Degree, Lodge, or Nation, be invited to attend.”

Dr Burnes declined the Festival and Procession, but his embarkation is thus mentioned in *The Overland Times* of the 16th December, published after his departure:—“Dr Burnes was accompanied by troops of friends and admirers, and nearly every Mason on the island. A number of ladies were in carriages, and it took the departing gentleman no short time to pass to each to bid them adieu. Sir W. Cotton, and all the leading men of the Presidency, were present, and the regret at the parting about to take place betwixt the Commander-in-Chief and Dr Burnes seemed to be felt equally by both. Dr Burnes appeared, by the time he reached the boat which awaited him, to have been completely overcome with this last proof from his friends of the sincerity of their attachment to him. On getting on board his boat he turned round and took a final farewell of a large number of the Masonic Craft who attended him to the water's edge.”

their much-valued and respected associate, both in his position, for a series of years, of Secretary of the Medical Board, and more recently by the influence of high mental attainments in the discharge of the duties of President of the Society. That the Society can never forget that much of the success of its Meetings, their popularity, their correctness of procedure, has been due to the conciliatory disposition and personal character of the excellent President who now leaves them, and carries with him into the scenes of his retirement the affectionate regards and the hearty good wishes of his former associates.

“That in testimony of the long and valuable services of James Burnes, Esq. M.D., K.H., Physician-General of the Bombay Army, the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society do record its deep sense of the great advantages it has derived from his varied talents, his refined taste, and his hearty and energetic assistance for more than a quarter of a century, and its unfeigned regret that it should now be compelled, on account of his leaving India, to accept the resignation of his seat among the *Vice-Presidents* of the Society.” It may be added, that the Geographical Society of Bombay elected him an Honorary Office-Bearer for life, “in testimony of their appreciation of his services to the cause of Geographical Science.”

Though Dr Burnes has rarely appeared before the world as an author, his tastes are eminently refined and literary, and his mind abundantly stored with general knowledge. The account of his visit to the Court of Hyderabad sufficiently shows what might have been looked for from his pen, had he found leisure or inclination to write for publication. He has ever taken an active share in the promotion of all intellectual pursuits, and was one of the most elegant and most attractive members Western India possessed of general society. Fond of company, in which he was always the favourite, and where he eminently shone, he was the party most generally fixed upon amongst us to preside at public meetings, and do the honours where entertainments were given to distinguished strangers or members of the community; and his Address, on the occasion of a public dinner being given to Sir H. Pottinger on his way from China, was so marked for elegance and aptitude, as to be reprinted in

all the leading journals of Europe. The eminent official position he so long enjoyed in the Service, to which he was an honour, has always been employed by him in endeavouring to advance merit, and promote unpretending worth—to assist the necessitous, and soothe those heats and irritations which will occasionally arise in the best regulated communities, and which tend so grievously to impair the comfort of public men, and to interfere with the interests of the Service. As a private friend, he has ever been warm, constant, and sincere in his attachments. Though generally to be met with in every scene of harmless merriment, gaiety, or festivity, no man more frequently approached the couch of sickness or chamber of suffering—none could strive more to soothe the pangs of sorrow or anguish of affliction. He leaves India almost without an enemy, and with scarcely an acquaintance who is not also an admirer and a friend. The following General Order appeared in the Government “Gazette,” on his tendering his resignation; those who know with what caution commendation is meted out by Government, will alone be able to appreciate the value of the praises it bestows:—

“GENERAL ORDER.

“BY THE RIGHT HON’BLE THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL.

“*Bombay Castle, 19th November 1849.*

“No. 590 of 1849.—Physician-General J. Burnes, M. D. Knight of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order, is permitted to retire from the Hon’ble Company’s Service, on the pension of his rank, agreeably to Jameson’s Code, Section XXXIII, Article 80, from the 20th inst.

“In submitting this Resignation for the sanction of the Government, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has commended to the special attention of the Right Honourable the Governor-in-Council ‘the eminent merits of Dr Burnes, who during his service of twenty-eight years, has ever been conspicuous for the zeal and ability with which he has acquitted himself in every situation of duty in which he has been placed.’

“This gratifying testimonial will be brought prominently to the notice of the Hon'ble the Court of Directors, and the Governor-in-Council will have much satisfaction in adding, that the Records of the Government shew the services of Dr Burnes to have extended beyond the line of his own profession; and that, on these occasions likewise, he has always evinced the same conspicuous ability, energy of character, and zealous devotion to the public interests, which have distinguished him throughout his meritorious career in the Medical Department, from the head of which he is now retiring with honour.

“By Order of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council,
(Signed) P. M. MELVILL, Lieut.-Col.

Secy to Govt.”

The Governor-General expressed his cordial concurrence in the above Order, by courteously intimating that it furnished but “a fitting close to Dr Burnes's distinguished career of service.” It will show the English reader that the E. I. Company has lost a most valuable servant, and the Service a highly honoured and useful member, by the retirement from amongst us of the late Physician-General. We hear that Dr Burnes, on reaching home, will probably start as a Candidate for the East India Direction. Should he succeed in gaining a seat amongst the magnates of Leadenhall Street, his services will no doubt be of great value, not only as regards the interests of the Medical Department, but in reference also to those large and important measures of public policy, into the consideration of which his eminent talents and long Indian experience will so well fit him to enter.



This gratifying statement will be read with interest by the members of the Council, and the Government will have much satisfaction in adding that the Records of the Government show the services of Dr. Barnes to have extended beyond the limits of his own profession, and that, on these occasions likewise, he has always attained the same high standard of ability, energy of character, and zealous devotion to the public interests, which have distinguished him throughout his illustrious career in the Medical Department, for the head of which he is now retiring with honour.

By Order of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council,
 (Signed) P. McMurtry, Deputy Collector.

The Government are pleased to see that the above Order, by continuing to furnish Dr. Barnes with a seat on the Council, has not only secured to the E. I. Company a most valuable servant, and the Service a highly honoured and useful member, but also, by the retirement from amongst us of the late Physician-General, we hear that Dr. Barnes, on reaching home, will probably start as a Candidate for the East India Direction. Should he succeed in gaining a seat amongst the magnates of Leadenhall Street, his services will no doubt be of great value, not only as regards the interests of the Medical Department, but in reference also to those large and important measures of public policy, into the consideration of which his eminent talents and long Indian experience will be well fitted him to enter.

Col. 7729
 27/11/88