OBITUARY.

Samuel Rutherford Macphail.

Samuel Rutherford Macphail was born at Isle Ornsay, in the Island of Skye, in 1856, in the temporary Free Church Manse. His father, the Rev. John S. Macphail, was one of three well-known brothers in the Free Church.

The Rev. John S. Macphail was a man of singular beauty, and his good looks descended to his son. His works and features are still fresh in the memories of the older people of Sleat. Mr. Macphail had recently arrived on the island. The parish of Sleat was an important district in the eyes of the newly-founded Free Church of Scotland, and Macphail's post was a key position. Immediately to the south the Established Church was entrenched at Armadale under the patronage of the Lord of the Isles. At Broadford, across the hills to the north, the Mackinnons had kept the flag of the Auld Kirk flying in the face of all the forces of disruption. There the Established Church was a keen and vital force, as in few other places in the Western Isles of Scotland. Mr. Macphail's charge was largely a missionary enterprise. One of his first duties was to build a church. While this was being completed at Knock, the family lived at Isle Ornsay. It was there that Samuel Rutherford was born, and he was named after the great Scottish Covenanter of Anwoth.

Skye at that time was still the Skye of Alexander Smith. A Skye resembling more nearly the island as it was when Samuel Johnson was ferried across from Glenelg to Armadale than it does the Skye of to-day. A Skye of black cattle and black houses, where the great sales were still held at Broadford, and the West Highland Railway was but a dream of the future. The only sign of a mechanical age was MacBrayne's steamer passing up and down the Sound of Sleat. It was, as it still is, a Skye of wondrous beauty. Straight across from Isle Ornsay is the entrance of Loch Hourn—one of the most lovely of Highland lochs. Immediately to the north lay the Coolin, the wonderful mountain range, crested with the ever-changing mists. When his father was translated to Kilmuir, where Flora Macdonald and Dr. Macphail's mother lie buried, he was again to live amid scenes of grandeur and romance.

In 1869 young Macphail came south to Edinburgh. In 1874 he commenced his medical studies at the old University Buildings, and in the old Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. The Medical School that Macphail entered as a student contained several teachers whose outstanding personalities were bound to impress themselves on the youths who attended their classes. Lister, Hughes Bennett, Christison, Laycock and William Turner were holding forth to enthusiastic audiences. Laycock had commenced his lectures on medical psychology, and one may be permitted to speculate whether his interest in nervous and intellectual phenomena may not have specially attracted Macphail's attention, and directed his footsteps along the path they were subsequently to follow.

Macphail graduated in 1878, and entered on a series of hospital appointments at Greenock, Huddersfield and Liverpool. He became Assistant Medical Superintendent to the Cumberland and Westmorland Mental Hospital in 1883. In 1884 he won the Bronze Medal and Prize of the Medico-Psychological Association. With his appointment in 1887 to be the first Physician-Superintendent of the Derby Borough Asylum, his real life's work may be said to have commenced.

The best years of Macphail's life were spent in Derby, and in the service of the institution he gave of his best willingly and without stint. Shortly after the close of the war he retired. He was not to be allowed to remain unemployed. The post of Medical Superintendent of New Saughton Hall was offered to him. From this appointment he retired four years ago.

Macphail was President of the Derby Medical Society in 1896. Another honour that he much appreciated was the Presidency of his old school—Daniel Stewart's—club, which came to him in 1925.

In his younger days Macphail was a good Rugby forward. He played for Edinburgh University, the Greenock Wanderers, and the Eden Wanderers. He retained his interest in the game to the last, and used to be seen frequently supporting his old school or university on a Saturday afternoon. Late in life he became an enthusiastic member of the Edinburgh Medical Curling Club.

Three things stood very close to Macphail's heart—his work, his beloved Isle

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of Skye, and the Caledonian Medical Society. Sometimes one was inclined to wonder whether the last might not be first in his affections. He was one of five students who founded the society in 1878.

Dr. Macphail held every post in the Society in turn. He was President at the meeting held at Derby in 1920. There he delivered an interesting and original address on " Derby and the Forty-Five," which showed that during the years of exile in the south he had not been neglectful of the history of his own country. In 1928 Macphail was Joint Jubilee President with Dr. W. A. Macnaughton, of Stonehaven, at the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations of the Society. Macphail presided at the dinner with dignity and charm. Those who heard his speech on that occasion realized that he at least felt that the ideals that had animated the five student founders fifty years before had been more than fulfilled, and that the growth of members in the society from the original five to over five hundred had more than justified their early efforts.

Macphail was a loyal son of Skye. He knew its songs and stories, and was learned in its language and traditions. The care with which his mother's grave was tended—the one well-kept spot in a sadly neglected churchyard—the restoration of his father's church at Kilmuir, which the Macphail family undertook shortly after the war, these were to him matters of extreme importance. It pleased him to know that his father's memory was still green in the parishes of Sleat, Kilmuir and Benbecula. He loved his island birthplace, and was proud of being one of " the children of the mist." He died on September 12, 1931, and was buried on the 16th in Lasswade Churchyard. As was only right in the passing of so good a Skyeman, he went upon his way wrapped in the folds of the Macphail tartan, with the wild notes of " MacCrimmon's lament " sounding down the breeze.

G. GIBSON.

GEORGE ALFRED WATSON.

George Alfred Watson was born in India in 1866, his father being a Lieut.-Colonel in the Royal Engineers. He returned to this country in early boyhood, and was educated at Edinburgh High School, and later at Edinburgh University. Graduating M.B., C.M. in 1887, he went into general practice for two or three years, but gave this up in 1890, and went to the Royal Edinburgh Asylum, Morningside, as Assistant Physician. In 1891 he was appointed Senior Assistant Medical Officer at Birmingham City Asylum and remained there till 1899. While at Birmingham he was greatly attracted towards the pathological side of his work, and founded the first pathological laboratory at that important mental hospital. On leaving Birmingham he went to London, and became a voluntary worker in the Pathological Laboratory of the London County Asylums at Claybury, and acted as Research Scholar to the British Medical Association. Three years later he succeeded Shaw Bolton as Assistant Pathologist to the London County Asylums. While at Claybury Watson wrote two important papers: (1) " The Mammalian Cerebral Cortex," which was published by the Royal Society; (2) " The Pathology and Morbid Histology of Juvenile General Paralysis." These papers attracted much attention, and at once stamped Watson as an original and painstaking worker.

In 1905 he came to Lancashire to succeed A. W. Campbell as Pathologist at Rainhill Mental Hospital. Here, during a period of twenty-one years, he performed many thousands of *post-mortem* examinations, the written reports of which constitute perhaps the most valuable collection of such records in the country.

Watson devoted much attention to pellagra—a disease from which his wife suffered, and from which she ultimately died. A brief report of his observations on this disease are printed in the *Board of Control Reports* of 1924.

In 1926 the Lancashire Mental Hospitals Board appointed Watson as Pathologist to the mental hospitals under their control—a belated recognition of his many years of devoted and distinguished service. This recognition of the reputation which Watson had attained, not only in this country, but abroad, came too late, for already his powers were beginning to fail, and he himself was the first to recognize that the task allotted to him would tax him severely. He broke down under the strain, and after less than three years was compelled to resign his post. He was not destined to enjoy his retirement, for his health continued to deteriorate rapidly, and on July 27, 1931, he died.

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