Sir DONALD MacALISTER OF TARBERT, Bt., K.C.B., M.D.,
LL.D., Sc.D., &c.,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

With the death at Cambridge, on 15th January, 1934, in his seventy-ninth year, of Sir Donald MacAlister, Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, a great figure has passed out of the academic and medical life of Great Britain. He was of Highland descent, from the MacAlisters of Tarbert, in Argyllshire, and was born at Perth on 17th May, 1854. His school education was obtained there, at Aberdeen, and at Liverpool, where his father had finally settled in business. From school in 1873 he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, with a scholarship, and four years later graduated in Arts as senior wrangler and first Smith's prizeman, in addition to many other undergraduate distinctions. A year later he was elected a Fellow of his college and, forsaking mathematics, definitely turned his mind to the study of medicine. His professional training was obtained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and he duly graduated M.B.Cantab. in 1881 and M.D. in 1884. After a time spent abroad in post-graduate work, he returned to Cambridge, was appointed a member of the staff of Addenbrooke's Hospital, and Linacre lecturer on physic, and thus definitely embarked on the teaching of medicine and on its practice as a physician. His earliest professional studies after graduation had been in pathology, but this was soon superseded by pharmacology and therapeutics, subjects in which he retained a keen interest to the end. In recognition of his special attainments he was chosen president of the Section of Therapeutics at the Toronto meeting of the British Medical Association in 1906, and for many years he was chairman of the "British Pharmacopoeia" committee of the General Medical Council, the 1898 and 1914 editions of which owed a great deal to his active collaboration.

Although interested in scientific and medical research and
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keenly appreciative of their practical results, Sir Donald MacAlister was never a "research worker" as the term is understood in medical circles. His cast of mind and abilities were more those of the statesman and administrator, and it was in these directions that he found a congenial field for his activities and reached high distinction. In Cambridge from the beginning he took a large share in the administrative work of the University, and in 1889 was elected its representative on the General Medical Council. He soon became one of its most influential members, and when he resigned from it last year, on account of failing health, he had served for forty-four years, twenty-seven of them in the presidential chair. As president his advice was frequently sought by the Government Departments concerned with medicine, pharmacy, and the public health, and as it was usually taken and acted on, he came to exercise a very wide influence on all these matters, an influence which was felt throughout the Empire, and resulted in many improvements in medical education and administration. Under his leadership it may fairly be said that the Council gained greatly in prestige and became markedly more efficient in carrying out the duties entrusted to it by Parliament. But it was not in medical matters only that his influence on the higher education and its administration was exercised. His exceptionally wide knowledge and culture rendered him closely acquainted with, and highly sympathetic to, all the many-sided aspects of university studies and activities, and, in addition, he brought to their consideration a practical business brain with a full appreciation of what was ideal and what was financially possible. These qualities inevitably led to much public work of a national kind, which he discharged with conspicuous distinction and success. He served for many years as chairman of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, as chairman of the Commission on Belfast University, and as a member of many important committees.

In 1907 he was appointed by the Crown Principal of the University of Glasgow, becoming the first non-clerical holder of that high office. Shortly thereafter he was made K.C.B., and in 1924 was created a baronet in recognition of his many public services. When he came to Glasgow he was 53 years
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of age, his academic life had been spent in England, and he had no special knowledge of Scottish university affairs, yet in a very short time he acquired a complete and sympathetic grasp of them, no less in their business than in their teaching and other aspects, and this soon found expression in numerous changes and reforms. Some of these may be considered as of a minor kind, such as the reorganization of the clerical staff, the institution of the College Common Rooms, the modernization of the library, and other changes in internal administration, all of which called for much planning and have proved of great benefit.

During his principalship the University was undergoing a large increase in the number of its students and great changes in its equipment. This expansion movement had begun very definitely in the time of his immediate predecessor, Principal Story, who had raised large sums of money to erect completely new departments of Physics, Botany, Physiology, Materia Medica, and Public Health, and to enlarge those of Anatomy, Surgery, and Chemistry. Under Sir Donald MacAlister these activities were continued, no less than twenty new chairs were founded, the number of lecturers and their status and emoluments were increased, further building was undertaken, and to a certain extent the Royal Technical College and the Royal Infirmary were incorporated into the teaching resources of the University—and all this was accomplished without incurring debt or a financial deficit. Nor were the social and athletic sides of university life overlooked in all these changes. A new Union, costing £65,000, was built and furnished, new playing-fields with a commodious pavilion were provided, and three residential halls for men and one for women were acquired. From many contributors he received personally a large sum of money which was devoted to the building of a chapel in memory of those members of the University who perished in the Great War. Besides being the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, he was decorated by the French and Italian Governments, and from his fellow-citizens he received the freedom of the city of Glasgow in recognition of his great services to their University and in testimony of their personal esteem.

In 1929 he resigned the Principalship after twenty-two years'
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service, and was unanimously elected Chancellor of the University in succession to the late Earl of Rosebery and Midlothian. He was a great Principal, and Glasgow University owes much to him.  

R. S.

ALEX. DINGWALL-KENNEDY, M.B., Ch.B. (1903), M.D., died at Inverness, on 16th December, 1933.

WM. PRIMROSE, M.B., C.M. (1888), M.R.C.S., died at Porthleven, Cornwall, on 17th December, 1933.

JOHN THOMSON PRANGNELL, M.B., C.M. (1883), M.D., D.P.H., died at Falkirk, on 20th December, 1933.

MARY A. MATHER, M.B., Ch.B. (1913), died at Newcastle, on 26th December, 1933.

HUGH GIRVAN, M.B., C.M., (1888), M.D., died at Glasgow, on 27th December, 1933.

ROBT. PHILIP GRAHAM, L.R.C.P., &c. (1896), died at Motherwell, on 29th December, 1933.

DONALD MORISON, M.B., C.M. (1880), J.P., died at Tobermory, on 31st December, 1933.

ALEX. HOGG BROWN, M.B., Ch.B. (1911), died at Birmingham, on 6th January, 1934.

THOMAS RUSSELL, M.B., C.M. (1889), died at Tollcross, Glasgow, on 7th January, 1934.

Sir DONALD MACALISTER OF TARBERT, Bt., K.C.B., M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P., died at Cambridge, on 15th January, 1934.