

Sir Alexander Blackie William Kennedy.

SIR ALEXANDER BLACKIE WILLIAM KENNEDY, who died on 1st November 1928, was born in London on 17th March 1847; he was the son of the Rev. John Kennedy, D.D., and his mother was the sister of Professor John Stuart Blackie. Educated at the City of London School, and later at the School of Mines (then quartered in Jermyn Street), he at the age of seventeen became a pupil to Messrs J. & W. Dudgeon, Marine Engineers, Millwall. During his apprenticeship the compound marine engine was being evolved, and his training in this new development enabled him in 1868 to accept a post as leading draughtsman in Palmers Engine Works at Jarrow. Shortly afterwards he became chief draughtsman to Messrs T. M. Tennant & Co., Leith, but he gave up this appointment to join Mr Bennett, Leith, as partner in his consulting marine engineering practice.

In 1874 a vacancy occurred in the Professorship of Engineering at University College, London, and Kennedy, then only twenty-seven years of age, was selected for this important and responsible post, which he retained until 1889, when his private practice as a consulting engineer had grown to such an extent that he was unable to carry any longer such a heavy burden of work. It may be stated without exaggeration that Kennedy revolutionised engineering training. He designed and equipped the first engineering laboratory, and his methods of teaching, including laboratory work, have been adopted in practically every university and technical college throughout the world. Much original work was also carried out in his laboratories on strength and elasticity of materials.

When he resigned his professorship in 1889, electrical engineering was just beginning to come to the front, and the remainder of Kennedy's professional career was devoted entirely to this branch of the profession. How successful he was is attested by the fact that many of the largest municipal electrical generating stations in this country were designed by him. In 1889 he was appointed Engineer to the Westminster Electric Supply Company, and in succeeding years became Consulting Engineer to the London County Council, to the Corporation of Edinburgh, to the London and North-Western Railway, and to many other important municipalities and companies.

Sir Alexander had the somewhat rare distinction of being elected as President both of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (1894) and of

the Institution of Civil Engineers (1906). On assuming office as President of the Civil Engineers he delivered a brilliant address on "Engineering and Modern Life."

In spite of the claims of professional work, Sir Alexander was able to devote much time to public services, and served on numerous Government Committees especially during the Great War.

His literary work began with a translation of Reuleaux's *Kinematics*; later on appeared his own textbook *The Mechanics of Machinery*, which went through many editions. After he had practically retired from professional work as an engineer he took up an entirely new field of work—exploration at Petra, and in 1925 published a remarkable monograph entitled *Petra: its History and Monuments*. He was an accomplished photographer and had been President of the Camera Club.

Numerous distinctions and honours were conferred upon him. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1887, received a knighthood in 1905, was made an honorary LL.D. of the Universities of Glasgow and Birmingham, and was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. One of the last distinctions conferred on him was that of Pasha by King Hussein in 1924.

Kennedy was a man of wide and catholic tastes, he was an omnivorous reader, a passionate lover of music, and in his younger days a keen Alpinist, learning the craft first in the Scottish Highlands and later on becoming a prominent member of the Alpine Club. His love of the Alps was shown by his editing Moore's *Alps in 1864*. His capacity for work was extraordinary—during his professorship not unfrequently after a heavy day's work he would sit at his desk up to the early hours of the morning busy with calculations and drawings dealing with some engineering problem which had interested him and which he thought would be of value to his students. That he was able to overtake such a mass of work without a serious breakdown in health was probably due to the relaxations he allowed himself in his love of music and to the game of golf. A man of lovable character, sterling worth, and of proved capacity in all that he undertook, he will be much missed in the engineering world.

T. H. B.