

## MEMOIR

## HENRY COCKBURN

HENRY COCKBURN, President of the Institute 1904–6, may be to the present generation of actuaries little more than a name, but to those associated with him a generation and more ago he remains an inspiration and a memory.

Although he made no contribution to the *Journal* except as President, there have been few who have wielded so great an influence in the general work of the Institute and in the everyday affairs of the Life Offices over so long a period.

He was born in Edinburgh on 29th June, 1848, the son of Archibald William Cockburn and grandson of the celebrated Scottish Judge, Henry Lord Cockburn. He was educated at the Edinburgh Academy, and passed the matriculation examination of the Faculty of Actuaries in Scotland in 1866, being at that time in the service of the "Standard". On 28th January, 1874, he was admitted a Fellow of the Faculty, by which time he had come south on appointment to the London Office of the Norwich Union Insurance Society. A year or two later he was appointed Life Manager and Actuary to the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company in London, and held that office for thirty-eight years.

He was elected a Fellow of the Institute in 1879, and a Member of the Institute of Actuaries Club (later merged in the Actuaries Club) in 1881, and was thus the oldest member of both these bodies. He was Chairman of the Life Offices' Association from 1899 to 1902. As a member of the Joint Committee on Mortality Investigation of the Institute and Faculty, his practical nature and business acumen were undoubtedly of great assistance in the work which resulted in the O<sup>M</sup> series of tables. During his presidency he served on the Departmental Committee on Bond Investment Companies.

On his retirement in 1913 he gave much of his time to charitable works, and throughout the war served the Red Cross and St John of Jerusalem with the utmost devotion, particularly in the cause of British prisoners of war. He took the keenest interest in the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, the Invalid Children's Aid Association, and the Chelsea Hospital for Women.

He was a keen golfer all his life, and up to the age of 85 played a round almost every day. There were few courses he did not know. Tall and loosely built, he was an ardent mountaineer, although his application to his official duties left him little time in which to follow his inclinations.

Nevertheless he was for several years the honorary librarian of the Alpine Club, and he was largely responsible for the catalogue of the club library. He was also an original member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

Henry Cockburn leaves behind a great reputation in the Company he served so long as actuary. He was essentially practical and had the faculty of putting his finger (literally he put his forefinger) on the weak spot in any statement placed before him. Few men could write a letter, stating clearly and courteously all that was necessary to the subject in hand, in so few words. In all that he said he was brief and definite, yet he was never known to use a coarse or vulgar expression—with all his precision and perspicacity he was never wanting in courtesy. He will long be held in affectionate remembrance by those whose fortunate lot it was to own him as their chief.

H. J. P. O.