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THE ROYAL MILITARY CHRONICLE.

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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

GENERAL SIR JAMES HENRY CRAIG, K. B.

THERE is a debt of gratitude which the public owes to the memory of every eminent man who has distinguished himself in the service of his country, which it ought, in every instance, to feel a generous pride in repaying. The late General Sir James Henry Craig may with truth be said to have devoted his life to the public service; and to have in reality proved the victim of an ardent zeal for the discharge of those important duties imposed on him by the high military commands with which his Sovereign invested him. It is with pleasure we understand, that a detailed account, doing ample justice to his merits, is preparing to meet the public eye. But in the mean time, a short outline of his most active life may prove a useful document and incentive to inspire a generous ardour in others, to emulate him in that career of honour in which he was so eminently distinguished.

Of a respectable Scottish family, the Craigs of Dalnair and Costar-ton, and born at Gibraltar, where his father held the appointments of Civil and Military Judge, he entered the army at the early age of fifteen, in 1763; and in a season of peace he imbibed the elementary knowledge of his profession in the best military schools of the Continent. In 1770, he was appointed aid-du-camp to General Sir Robert Boyd, then Governor of Gibraltar, and obtained a company in the 47th regiment, with which he went to America in 1774, and was present at the battles of Lexington and Bunker's Hill, in which latter engagement he was severely wounded. In 1776, he accompanied his regiment to Canada, commanding his company in the action of Trois Rivieres, and he afterwards commanded the advanced guard of the army in the expulsion of the rebels from that province. In 1777, he was engaged in the actions at Ticonderoga and Hubertown, in the latter of which engagements he was again severely wounded. Ever in a position of honourable danger, he received a third wound in the action at Freeman's Farm. He was engaged in the disastrous affair at Saratoga, and was then distinguished by General Burgoyne and the brave Fraser, who fell in that action, as a young officer who promised to attain to the very height of the military career. On that occasion he was selected by General Burgoyne to carry home the dispatches, and was immediately thereafter promoted to a majority in the new 82d regiment, which he accompanied to Nova Scotia in 1778, to Penobscot in 1779, and to North Carolina in 1781; being engaged in a continued scene of active service during the whole of those campaigns, and generally commanding the light troops, with orders to act from his own discretion, on which his superiors in command relied with implicit confidence. In a service of this kind, the accuracy of his intelligence, the fertility of his resources, and the clearness of his military judgment, were alike conspicuous, and drew on



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him the attention of his Sovereign, who noted him as an officer of the highest promise.

In 1781 he obtained the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the 82d regiment, and in 1783 that of the 16th, which he commanded in Ireland till 1791, having been promoted to the rank of Colonel in 1790. In 1792, he went to the Continent for the purpose of instructing himself in the discipline of the Prussian army, at that time esteemed the most perfect in Europe; and in a correspondence with General Sir D. Dundas, communicated the result of his knowledge to that most able tactician, from whose professional science his country has derived so much advantage in the improvement of the disciplinary system; and it is believed that the first experiments of the new exercise were, by his Majesty's orders, reduced to the test of practice, under the eye of Colonel Craig, in the 16th regiment.

In 1793 he was appointed to the command of Jersey, and soon thereafter of Guernsey, as Lieutenant Governor. In 1794 he was appointed Adjutant-General to the army under his Royal Highness the Duke of York, by whose side he served during the whole of that campaign on the Continent, and whose favour and confidence he enjoyed to the latest moments of his life.

In 1794 he obtained the rank of Major-General, and in the beginning of the following year he was sent on the expedition to the Cape of Good Hope, where, in the reduction and conquest of that most important settlement, with the co-operation of Adm. Sir G. K. Elphinstone, and Major-Gen. Clarke, he attained to the highest pitch of his military reputation, and performed that signal service to his King and country, of which the memory will be as lasting as the national annals. Nor were his merits less conspicuous in the admirable plans of civil regulation, introduced by him in that hostile quarter, when invested with the chief authority, civil and military, as governor of the Cape, till succeeded in that situation by the Earl of Macartney, in 1797, who, by a deputation from his Majesty, invested General Craig with the Red Ribbon, as an honourable mark of his Sovereign's just sense of his distinguished services.

Sir James Craig had scarcely returned to England, when it was his Majesty's pleasure to require his services on the staff in India. On his arrival at Madras, he was appointed to the command of an expedition against Manilla, which not taking place, he proceeded to Bengal, and and took the field service. During a five years command in India, his attention and talents were unremittingly exerted to the improvement of the discipline of the Indian army, and to the promotion of that harmonious co-operation between its different constituent parts, on which not only the military strength, but the civil arrangement of that portion of the British Empire so essentially depend.

In January, 1801, Sir James Craig was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and returned to England in 1802. He was appointed to the command of the eastern district, and remained in England till

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1805, when, notwithstanding his constitution was much impaired by a long train of most active and fatiguing service, he was selected by his Sovereign to take the command of the British troops in the Mediterranean. He proceeded to Lisbon, Gibraltar, Malta, and from thence to Naples, to act in co-operation with the Russian army. But the object of these plans being frustrated by the event of the battle of Austerlitz, Sir James withdrew the troops from Naples to Messina, in Sicily. During the whole period of his command in the Mediterranean, he had suffered severely from that malady which terminated his life,—a dropsy, proceeding from an organic affection of the liver; and feeling his disease sensibly gaining ground, he returned, with his Sovereign's permission, to England, in 1806.

A temporary abatement of his disorder flattering him with a prospect of recovery, and being unable to reconcile his mind to a situation of inactivity, he once more accepted of an active command from the choice of his Sovereign, and, in 1808, on the threatening appearance of hostilities with the United American States, was sent out to Quebec, as governor in chief of British America. The singular union of vigour and prudence, which distinguished his government in that most important official situation, are so recently impressed on the public mind, as to need no detail in this place. His merits were avowed and felt on both sides of the Atlantic; and as they proved the termination, so they will ever be felt as throwing the highest lustre on the whole train of his public services. His constitution, now utterly enfeebled by a disease which precluded all hope of recovery, he returned to England in July, 1811.—Within three weeks of his death he was promoted to the rank of General. He looked forward with manly fortitude to his approaching dissolution, and, in January, 1812, ended a most honourable and useful career, by an easy death, at the age of sixty-two.



