

EDWARDS, Sir WILLIAM RICE (1862 - 1923), surgeon, director-general, Indian Medical Service

Name: William Rice Edwards
Date of birth: 1862
Date of death: 1923
Parent: H. Powell Edwards
Gender: Male
Occupation: surgeon, director-general, Indian Medical Service
Area of activity: Medicine
Author: Idwal Lewis

Born at Caerleon, Monmouthshire, 17 May 1862, son of canon H. Powell Edwards. Educated at Magdalen College School, Oxford, Clifton College, and the London Hospital, he obtained his M.D. and entered the Indian Medical Service as surgeon in 1886, first in Bengal, and then, in 1890, he was appointed personal surgeon to Sir Frederick (afterwards lord) Roberts, a post which he held for four years. When Roberts left India, Edwards joined the political department. When Roberts took command in South Africa, at the end of 1899, Edwards was again appointed to his personal staff and served through the South African war, 1899-1900. On his return to India he was appointed residency surgeon in Kashmir, nine years later he became chief medical officer of the North West Frontier Province, and in 1915 he became surgeon-general of Bengal. In January 1918 he was appointed director-general of the Indian Medical Service, retiring from that post in 1923. It was Edwards's trying task, following the famous Montagu report on Indian constitutional reforms, to transfer the government and administration of public health and medicine in India into the hands of the Indians, and to ensure that the transition worked smoothly. As director-general he was also a member of the Council of State for India. As a member of the Council of State, as a soldier, and as a medical man, he was held in high esteem. He was a careful and efficient administrator. He was twice married. He died 13 October 1923.

Author

Idwal Lewis

Sources

British Medical Journal, 20 October 1923

Further reading

[Obituary: The Late Major-General Sir William Rice Edwards](#), *The Indian Medical Gazette*, vol. 58, 12, December 1923, pp.606-607

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Published date: 1959

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