

SURGEON-GENERAL SIR ARTHUR MUDGE BRANFOOT
(1848-1914). K.C.I.E., I.M.S., M.B. (Lond.), L.R.C.P. (Eng.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.) - President
of the India Office Medical Board (1904-1913).

"In India he left a reputation of being one of the best men, in his own line, who have served in the Indian Medical Service."
British Medical Journal (1914).

Arthur Branfoot (1848-1914) [Epsom College 1859-1866] was the son of Dr J. H. Branfoot, a practitioner in Brentwood, and brother of Edward Percy Branfoot, who was a member of the England Rugby XV [Epsom College 1870-1874]. He received his medical training at Guy's Hospital where he qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1871. He graduated M.B. (London) with First Class Honours in obstetric medicine in 1872, and almost immediately entered the Madras Medical Service as Assistant Surgeon. Within a very short time he was appointed Civil Surgeon at Coconada and, afterwards, resident Surgeon at the General Hospital, Madras, until he was appointed Superintendent of the Government Maternity Hospital in 1879, and Professor of Midwifery and Gynaecology at the Madras Medical College in 1881. He was also Physician to the Madras General Hospital. In 1898, he was promoted to Colonel and immediately returned to military duties as Administrative Medical Officer. Further promotion came in 1901 when he was appointed Surgeon-General to the Government of Madras, and for a short time he served as Principal Medical Officer of the Bangalore and Southern Districts. He retired in 1903 and one year later succeeded Sir William Hooper as President of the Medical Board at the India Office, with the appointment for ten years as Surgeon-General. Other honours included the Vice-Presidency of the Royal Institute of



Public Health, and Principal Medical Officer, British Armed Forces in Burma. From 1904-1913 he served on the Advisory Boards for the Army and Medical Services and of the Army Hospitals and Sanitary Board. He was also a Member of the Council of the Lister Institute.

The Government Hospital for Women and Children, in Madras (see illustration) was founded in 1844 as the first specialised maternity hospital in India, and probably in Asia. It started as a small building where barely one hundred births per year were registered but, in 1882, Sir Arthur Mudge Branfoot founded the present-day buildings which now cater for some 18,000 births each year. This hospital was also the birthplace of the Obstetric and Gynaecological Society of Southern India. "General Branfoot did excellent work for the Indian Medical Service, and was awarded the *C.I.E.* in 1888, with promotion to *K.C.I.E.* in 1911. He made a great reputation for himself in Madras, and maintained it in Burma, as one who was ever ready and generous in help given to his fellow-practitioners. It was said of him that: "He was the most distinguished example of an all-round physician and surgeon, capable of dealing well with almost any problem in the whole domain of medicine. It is difficult to give any conception of the feeling of security, relief, and comfort, the presence of one with such knowledge, experience, skill, and reputation gave to every member of the medical profession in Rangoon.