

Sir James Falshaw, Bart. By **Bailie J. A. Russell, M.A., M.B.**

(Read January 6, 1890.)

Last June Sir James Falshaw, Bart., J.P., D.L., who had been long and honourably known in connection with railway and municipal matters in Scotland, died in Edinburgh, at the age of 79. He was the son of a wool merchant in Leeds, where he was born on 21st March 1810, the sixth of a family of fourteen; but it was in Scotland that he won fortune and reputation, and that he finally settled. At school he sat on the same bench with Sir John Hawkshaw under Mr Jonathan Lockwood, and at the age of fourteen he was articled for a seven years' apprenticeship to Mr Cusworth, architect and surveyor. At this time he laid the foundation of his first success by mastering the subject of skew arches. He then became agent in charge of a section of the Leeds and Selby Railway for the contractors Messrs Hamar & Pratt, who subsequently appointed him to the entire charge of the construction of the Whitby and Pickering Railway. In this bit of work he gained experience of steep gradients, curves, and other difficulties which afterwards stood him in good stead. Thereafter he obtained the position of chief-assistant to Mr G. Leather, engineer of the Aire and Calder Navigation, Goole Docks, &c. During the seven years he was with Mr Leather he had a share in preparing many important engineering schemes, among which were the Leeds Waterworks, involving a tunnel of $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile, the Bradford Waterworks, and the Stockton and Hartlepool Railway, of which Mr (now Sir John) Fowler was resident engineer. When 33 years of age, just at the time when the great outburst of railway construction was in progress, he began business on his own account as a railway engineer and contractor, and achieved considerable success. He then joined the staff of Messrs John Stephenson & Co. in the making of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway, which now forms part of the London and North-Western Trunk Line. This engagement brought him into contact with Mr Brassey and Mr Mackenzie, who were associated with Mr Stephenson, and with the first named well-known engineer he enjoyed a life long friendship. Under the auspices of this firm, Sir James Falshaw took a leading part in making large portions of the Caledonian and Scottish Central Railways and Scottish Midland Railways. In 1851 his

connection with the firm of Messrs John Stephenson & Co. ceased, and Mr Falshaw joined Mr Brassey as contractors for the construction of the Inverness and Nairn and Elgin Railway, Mr Falshaw taking the entire management. By himself he contracted for the upkeep for seven years of the Scottish Central and Scottish Midland Lines, and for the construction of the Denny branch Scottish Central Railway, and the Portpatrick, Stranraer, and Glenluce Railway. With Messrs Morkill & Prodhams, two former assistants, he contracted for the Berwickshire Railway and the Blaydon and Conside Branch of the North-Eastern.

He became a director of various minor railways, manufacturing, banking, shipping, and insurance companies, but never forgot the duty which he owed, to devote a portion of his time to the public good, and took the opportunity of a four years' residence in Nairn to enter the Town Council, whereupon he was elected Senior Bailie. In 1858 Sir James Falshaw settled in Edinburgh, and at once began to interest himself in the affairs of the city. He was returned to the Town Council in 1861, and three years later he was elected a Bailie, and on the resignation of Mr James Cowan to become Member of Parliament for the city in 1874, he was elected Lord Provost. At this time the Town Council had to face many difficult questions, including the promotion of no less than three bills in Parliament; and the city of Edinburgh owes much to the energy and sagacity shown by Sir James Falshaw in all departments of the city's work. He showed great zeal in making preparations when cholera threatened to visit the town, and he had a considerable share in passing the Improvement Trust Act, which has done so much for the health and amenity of Edinburgh. Among the improvements executed during his reign as Lord Provost may be mentioned the widening of Princes Street, the widening of the North Bridge, the opening of West Princes Street Gardens to the public, the covering in of the Waverley Market, and the purchasing of the Arboretum. Undoubtedly, the most important work of Sir James Falshaw's municipal life was the introduction of the Moorfoot water supply into Edinburgh—a scheme in which he took a deep interest, and which was completed after his term of office as Lord Provost had expired, but while he was Chairman of the Works Committee of the Water Trust. His Baronetcy was conferred upon him in 1876,

on the occasion of the visit of the Queen to inaugurate the equestrian monument erected in Charlotte Square to the memory of the Prince Consort. Sir James also filled the honourable office of Master of the Merchant Company. He was long connected with the North British Railway Company, of which he was elected Deputy-Chairman in 1881, and subsequently Chairman, an office which he held until 1887, when advancing age led him to vacate the more onerous position to again become Deputy-Chairman. It was during his tenure of the chair that the Tay Bridge was opened, and he had a lively interest in the still greater undertaking promoted by the Forth Bridge Company, of which he was the first Chairman.

Sir James Falshaw was elected an Associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1854, and became a Fellow of this Society in 1866.

He was twice married—first, in 1841, to a daughter of the late Mr Thomas Morkell of Astley, who died in 1864; and again in 1871 to a daughter of Mr Thomas Gibbs, Norwood. Sir James was predeceased by Lady Falshaw, and left no family. He was not only recognised as a man of sterling integrity, but one of high Christian character, and though of a brusque demeanour, he had many friends. He was a Wesleyan Methodist, and in politics a Conservative. In the conduct of public business he was clear-sighted and hard-headed, utterly fearless, and full of energy and determination, and the results of his reign—both at the Town Council and Railway Board—were generally excellent, though it must be confessed, in the words of the *Scotsman*, that his impatience of long speeches and his laconic methods of conducting business, occasionally staggered the advocates of liberty of speech. In gratitude for his services to the city, his portrait was painted by subscription among leading citizens, and now hangs in the Council Chambers.

Dr Edmund Ronalds. By J. Y. Buchanan, Esq.

Dr Edmund Ronalds was born in Canonbury Square, London, in the year 1819. His father was Edmund Ronalds, merchant in London, and his mother Eliza Anderson, daughter of James Anderson, LL.D., also of London. His father's elder brother was Sir Francis