

OBITUARY

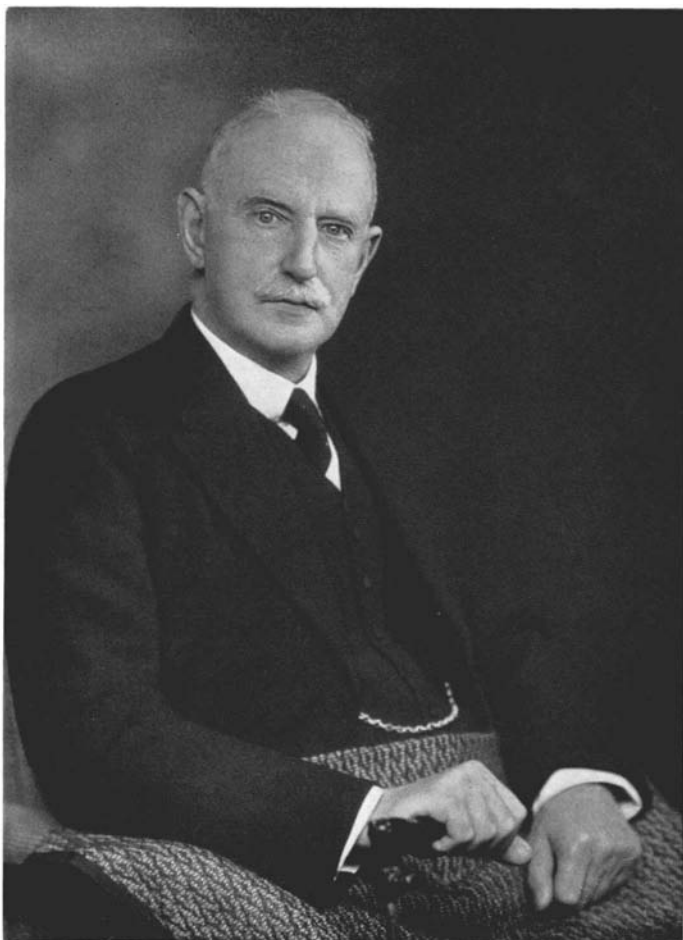
MAJOR E. B. WAGGETT (London)

MAJOR ERNEST BLECHYNDEN WAGGETT, who died from cerebral embolus, on January 5th, in his seventy-third year, was one of the gallant band of pioneers in oto-laryngology. He was a man of outstanding and brilliant personality.

The son of the late Dr. John Waggett of London, he was educated at Charterhouse and Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took a first class in the Natural Science Tripos. He then went to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and was appointed house physician at the Royal Free Hospital but soon returned to St. Bartholomew's as house surgeon to Professor Howard Marsh. He went to the London Throat Hospital as pathologist and became a surgeon there, and also surgeon in charge of the Nose, Throat and Ear Department at the Royal Northern Hospital. In 1905 Charing Cross Hospital decided to appoint specialists to take charge of their special departments, and the Council and Medical Staff conferred on Waggett the unusual distinction by inviting him to be their first specialist for the Ear, Nose and Throat Department. At the time of his appointment, it was a small department with no beds, the Hospital was in debt and unable to afford special equipment, instruments or even special diet, so Waggett provided these at his own expense.

His Hospital patients were his first consideration, and never at any time did he allow any personal factor to interfere with his high sense of duty of doing his utmost for his patients. On more than one occasion he has postponed his annual holiday to stand by a Hospital patient who was critically ill. The Ear, Nose and Throat Department of Charing Cross Hospital rapidly increased in size as the result of Waggett's skill and enthusiasm, and when he retired the department had two small wards, amounting to fourteen beds and five cots, as well as a fully equipped operating theatre all on one floor, an assistant surgeon, a registrar and a house surgeon.

Waggett's ideals were very high; his straightforward, quick decisions, sound judgment devoid of self-interest, and his charming personality commanded the admiration of all who came in contact with him. He had a flair for encouraging and helping his junior colleagues. The sincerity of his praise or condemnation was manifest. In his professional work and particularly in the rapid development of nasal surgery, he displayed considerable originality and ingenuity. He tried any promising new instrument or form of treatment. For



MAJOR E. B. WAGGETT.

[face p. 118

Obituary

example, in 1906, when Killian and Brünings were designing instruments for bronchoscopy and œsophagoscopy, Waggett went to Freiberg and brought back a complete set of these instruments for the Hospital. As far as I know he was one of the first to use these instruments in this country, and a little later the suspension laryngoscopy apparatus. His ripe and practical experience of endoscopy is recorded in the *Index of Treatment* by Robert Hutchison.

Space will not permit me to recount his many valued services to Oto-laryngology and to his Hospital, or to the territorial R.A.M.C. He was a very distinguished officer in the R.A.M.C. and served abroad throughout the Great War and did not return to his private practice for many months after the Armistice, when he found it difficult to settle down to civil life. A few years before the Great War, Waggett maintained that Germany, in the event of war, would attempt to land an army on the east coast, and that we had no real defences to prevent that army from reaching London, if a successful landing was accomplished. Consequently, he spent many a Sunday and a great deal of his spare time in making maps and plans for medical service in such an event. At the end of 1912, the Press launched a physical fitness campaign by recommending wholemeal bread. Waggett improved on this by giving up his practice for three weeks to advocate universal Military Service. By public speeches and writings he outlined a scheme by which young men over eighteen should be compelled to serve in the territorial army for three months in the first year and one month in each of the second and third years. He received no support from official circles and the scheme was dropped.

Some years ago both his legs were amputated above the knees, but he refused to be an invalid. He insisted on seeing some of his old patients. He attended committee meetings and was frequently seen in his chair at Council Meetings of his Hospital. He courageously and cheerfully carried on his many interests ignoring his disability with a smile and never a grumble. His faithful secretary and nurse, Miss Dawes, who served him and his family for thirty years, piloted him in his chair through the busiest streets of London, regardless of danger, and encouraged him to go anywhere. The loss of his legs gave him more time to pursue his favourite hobby of sketching and pastel work. Many of his pictures were exhibited and highly praised by those able to judge.

Alas! a great and loyal gentleman, of fascinating character, truly beloved and never to be forgotten by all his many friends and associates, has passed on.

E.D.D.D.