

## OBITUARY

### THOMAS GWYNNE MAITLAND

M.A., B.Sc., M.D., D.Phil.

Dr. Thomas Gwynne Maitland died suddenly at his home in Cheshire on Aug. 10, 1948. He was medical superintendent of the Cunard White Star Company for twenty years. Born at Merthyr Tydfil in 1875, he was educated at University College School and at the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester, and Paris. He graduated M.B., Ch.B., at Edinburgh University in 1907, and obtained his M.D. with distinction in 1908. He became a doctor of philosophy of Manchester University in 1911. His early experience was varied and unusual. At one time or other he was demonstrator in physiology at Manchester University, editor of the *Manchester Medical School Gazette*, lecturer in physiology at the Universities of Wales and Birmingham, honorary physician to Walsall General Hospital, lecturer on psychology at the Birmingham Midland Institute, and director of the typhus colony in Serbia during the first world war as a lieutenant-colonel in the Serbian Army. He contributed numerous papers to medical and psychological journals, and in 1918 published his *Examination of the Basis of Personality*. In 1920 he joined the Cunard Company and in 1926 was appointed its medical superintendent, a post for which he was pre-eminently suited by his rich experience and by natural aptitude and technical ability. He retired in September, 1946.

From the beginning of his entry into this branch of occupational health his aim was to improve the lot of the merchant seaman, and the outstanding contribution to this end made by the Cunard White Star Company during recent years, with its resulting effect on conditions in the Merchant Navy as a whole, is due in great measure to Dr. Maitland's personal influence. His interest took him beyond the sea and its peculiar hazards, however, and the allied problem of industrial disablement with its economic and social repercussions soon became to him an issue of the first magnitude. In this field his influence behind the scenes was great. It is little known, for instance, that he was one of those initially responsible for the setting up of the B.M.A. Committee on Fractures, whose report in 1935 heralded a new era in orthopaedic and accident surgery; that he was an international authority on workmen's compensation; or that he was a powerful influence in the formation of the policy of the Birmingham Accident Hospital several years before it opened in 1941. One keen ambition of his was to see founded an accident hospital in Liverpool, and to this end plans were continually in his mind. As far back as 1935 his conception of rehabilitation and his clear view of the need for new and comprehensive legislation as the only means of solving issues bound up with resettlement and workmen's compensation were well in advance of contemporary medical and sociological thought.



Dr. Maitland had an unusual capacity for making and retaining friendships. To him this was no easy matter, but, his mind made up, he was a friend for life. He gave much. Behind the apparent physical frailty was a high courage, an obvious integrity, and a deep consuming energy based on a passionate desire to help the underdog. He was modest to a fault and abhorred publicity. As a host he was beyond compare, a supreme cosmopolitan. But perhaps his most appealing asset was his sense of humour, combined with an uncanny ability to debunk the pedant. It was not in him to suffer fools gladly, but he was essentially a man of gentleness and much understanding. To those whose privilege it was to come within his circle of friends his death meant an irreplaceable loss. Medicine can ill afford to lose its philosophers, and Dr. Maitland truly was one of them in high degree. His contribution to the welfare of seamen and disabled workers throughout the country, acknowledged too little during his life largely because of his own wish, now demands nothing less than the fullest recognition.

D.S.



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