

DR. WALTER JAMES DODD.

BY C. A. PORTER, M.D., BOSTON.

IN 1892 there came to the Massachusetts General Hospital a young man, Walter Dodd by name, to fill the position of assistant apothecary. Born in London, he came here at the age of nine to live with relatives in Somerville. A few years of schooling, a few more years with the Oriental Tea Company, and then a desire to go to sea possessed him. But after a talk with Ex-president Eliot, who was attracted by his modesty and quality, he decided to study chemistry at Harvard under Professors Jackson and Hill.

Last December, a little before Christmas, Dr. Walter Dodd died in his own house on Marlborough street, more respected and more beloved than any other member of the staff.

During his first years at the hospital he was interested in photography and all the house officers and others are indebted to him for pleasant reminiscences of the old place and old times. His knowledge of chemistry and drugs, combined with his invariable good nature, made him an invaluable consultant. For example, I remember a particularly clever neurotic morphine addict who had been treated before and knew valerian when she smelled it. After several attempts Mr. Dodd invented a combination which completely deceived her and to this day is lost to medical art.

In 1896, the year of Roentgen's discovery, he had been appointed apothecary and photographer to the hospital. With his friend, Dr. Codman, he began work in March with a large static machine borrowed from the Neurological Department. In October he acquired a powerful 12-inch induction coil. After his regular duties were finished he literally burnt the midnight ray working enthusiastically all his spare time, utterly ignorant of any danger, until in November the rays burnt him. Immediately after his recovery he was again at work until in April, 1897, a severe general dermatitis with excruciating pain forced him to lay off. In July, at his suggestion, the first graft was applied to a chronic ulcer on the left forefinger. The operation was successful and was followed by immediate relief from pain. Within a month Mr. Joseph Godsoe, then assistant apothecary, recalls him, both hands in splints, working all night in the old Kingsley Studio in a temperature of 110°, with a cake of ice in the developing fluid to keep the films from leaving the glass. When morning came both men were in the apothecary shop as usual, performing their routine work and awaiting evening to return to the x-rays.

Many operations followed in spite of which Mr. Dodd kept continuously at work. In December, 1901, the whole surgical staff joined in giving him an engraved gold watch and chain as a slight acknowledgment of his devoted sacrifices. His rare pleasure on receiving this unexpected

token was good to see and to remember. In 1902 malignant disease first appeared, requiring amputation of two fingers, followed by a dozen more operations in the next three years. As an illustration of the grave humor of the man I shall always remember him one morning in May, 1905, coming down the hospital corridor with his characteristic gait, and an unusually happy smile on his face. He asked me whether I noticed anything queer about him. I said: "No." "Don't you see that I have had both hands in my trousers pockets and not a dressing on either?" It was the first time in eight years that he had been able to do this.

In 1908 he received his decree from the Vermont Medical College, immediately followed by his appointment as Roentgenologist to the hospital, and in 1909, instructor at the Harvard Medical School. In the meantime the work of his department was increasing almost beyond bounds. To bone and foreign-body work was added the therapeutic use of the x-ray. Then came bismuth and collargol injections with all that these have meant in diagnosis to medicine and surgery. In spite of loyal assistants working overtime, the x-ray department had hard work to keep up with the routine demands. If anybody wished to see a plate, give a lecture, or show lantern slides, Dr. Dodd was always ready with the material, and in spite of his mutilations, frequently arranged things with his own hands. These increasing deformities, combined with a naturally shy disposition and unwillingness to ask help from others, made him avoid society and any amusement outside of the hospital. Finally a friend insisted upon taking him out to dine, and himself wore gloves. This broke the ice and from now on his really social nature had opportunity to expand. His love for singing and natural talents as an actor made him unusually popular with the house-officers and at all of the gatherings of the Massachusetts General Hospital Alumni. He was noted for his stories at all times and places which were full of kindly wit, playing, like heat lightning, about the vagaries of human nature.

In 1909, after consultation with friends, he determined to open a private x-ray plant at 259 Beacon Street with Dr. Ariel George. In 1910 he married Margaret Lea, and for the first time was thoroughly happy. His practice increased, he spent the summers at Point Allerton where it was his pleasure, after long years of institution work, to entertain his friends. His devotion to young Burnham Porter grew with years, and many happy days did the boy have helping Dodd work in his garden and wondering at what he accomplished with his grey-gloved hands.

When war was declared Dr. Dodd, an Englishman, was eager to help. The first Harvard Unit, for which he was to act as Roentgenologist, was to sail in June, 1915. A severe operation on the hand with an axillary dissection, would have deterred most men from any idea of this trip, but

Dr. Dodd, accompanied by his wife, with wounds unhealed, arrived in an ambulance at the train and planned to convalesce from the operation on the ocean and while on service in France. The character of his work and his qualities while on duty, Dr. Roger Lee will describe.

Upon his return in October, 1915, his general condition was better than it had ever been. He had served a cause that he loved, had made himself popular with patients and doctors alike, and in a characteristic way had picked up more knowledge and more anecdotes than any other member of the unit. During the beginning of 1916 he was very well and making plans to purchase a house, and by further division of labor to enlarge his usefulness and commence some writing. In the summer a sudden infection with chills developed and the epitrochlear and axillary glands quickly enlarged. He lost weight and had continuous fever. In spite of this he purchased his house. In August a gland at the elbow was removed and found infected both with pus and cancer. A very thorough dissection of the axilla followed, from which, for the first time he showed little tendency to react. There developed a persistent and racking cough which could not be explained, though all, including himself, feared metastases. In November it became clear that both lungs were involved. During the last days of his illness he was always thinking of others, would brighten up to see a friend or tell a story, but for the most part was dreaming in a mild delirium of past incidents in his life and the happy days in France. There was ever a meaning in these wanderings, though often his wife and friends did not understand. With a whimsical smile he would frequently correct some misuse of words or flighty ideas. On December 16th he died, having, in his short life, accomplished all that makes life worth living. Through pain and suffering he had forgotten himself and thought only of his work. He had become an authority, his unbiased conservative opinions carried conviction. In the medical societies he rarely spoke, but when he did, all listened. He had been loyal to the hospital; his wife looked after him with devoted care; he had hosts of friends. In his own calm, serene way he had shown us that pain and operations were mere incidents. He has taught us how to live and how to die.

Before a recent operation he wrote a will giving \$100 to start an endowment fund for the x-ray department. These were his words:—"With the hope that others who can afford more will give according to their means."

WALTER DODD IN FRANCE IN 1915.

By ROGER I. LEE, M.D., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ONE morning in the spring of 1915, Walter Dodd hunted me up at the hospital and said he wanted to have an important talk with me. He had just heard about the Harvard Unit and was

fired with enthusiasm to go with the unit and to be of service to the afflicted in Europe. He felt he might have to be looked after a little and hoped in case of need Dr. Porter and I would consent to do what he termed "that great favor." But the real problem to him and concerning which he wanted advice was whether in my opinion his presence might inconvenience the unit on account of the possible extension of the disease while he was abroad. Very calmly and quietly he talked of the inevitable outcome. He had accepted that. To his mind the sole consideration was that the occurrence of the inevitable outcome should not in any way handicap the work of the unit. I attempted to put forth my own point of view, that if ever a man was entitled to the comforts of home he was that man. Since it was quite uncertain where the Harvard Unit would be or under what conditions it would live, it was unnecessary for Walter Dodd to exchange the well deserved comforts of his home for the possible hardships and possible overwork in behalf of any cause, no matter how good. However, Walter abruptly ended that particular argument by saying that the considerations that I had brought forth neither interested nor influenced him.

When it was finally decided that Walter would be a member of the unit he was operated on again. He left his house in Allerton in an ambulance to take the boat train for New York. No one, I think, could fail to be impressed by this picture. Both his hands were bandaged, one was greatly swollen. He had put on his "store clothes," as he always called them, for the first time after operation to begin the journey. It seemed indeed remarkable that this man was on his way to the war-zone to help others. On the boat many of the doctors and nurses of the Harvard Unit first learned to know this cheerful, genial, lovable, kindly soul. Always quiet and retiring, nevertheless he was the centre and ringleader of the fun and merriment on the ship.

In England most of the unit were much disturbed because it was not known even then just where the unit was going. While we were bothering about petty details of our equipment the one man whose entire work depended upon his equipment refused to attempt to anticipate possible difficulties of details of equipment. He made a careful survey of the general nature of the work and of the general problems involved.

London was as ever a source of joy to Walter. He was born there. He derived much amusement from recalling incidents in his youth, particularly his escapades as a boy of eight in his attempts to be an actor. The London Cockney was a never-ending source of pleasure. His whimsical mind fashioned many a good story out of bits of conversation, and his good imitative powers and histrionic ability added greatly to the telling of these stories. Often late at night during the inactivity of the unit in Lon-