

Obituary Notice

ERNEST MAX BRIEGER, 1891-1969

Dr. E. M. Brieger, who died on 31 January, 1969, was born, brought up and educated in Breslau, and obtained his medical degree at the University of Breslau. After distinguished service as a medical officer in World War I, he became director of the Municipal Tuberculosis Hospital of his home town. He was the German representative on the Committee for After-care and Rehabilitation of the International Union against Tuberculosis, and it was his pioneer work in this field that brought him into contact with England, and in particular with Papworth Village Settlement. When the establishment of Hitler's regime forced him to leave Germany, he joined the staff at Papworth, where he took charge of the Department of Industrial and Clinical Physiology.

From the problems of rehabilitation and gross pathology in tuberculosis, he increasingly directed his interest towards the relation between the causative organism and the host cell. It was the proximity of Papworth to the Strangeways Research Laboratory at Cambridge, with its world-wide reputation for research in tissue culture and cell biology, that led to discussion with the Director of the laboratory, Dame Honor Fell. This marked the beginning of a happy period of association with the laboratory, which extended over 25 years. Abreast of new technical developments, Dr. Brieger was one of the first to use the electron microscope in the study of biological material. In the mid-1940's he collaborated with Dr.

V. E. Cosslett at the Cavendish Laboratory in an investigation into the filterable form of the tubercle bacillus.

Some 10 years later, Dr. R. G. Cochrane drew Dr. Brieger's attention to various aspects of the host-parasite relation in leprosy, and encouraged him to investigate some of these problems, using the techniques that he and his colleagues had developed in their studies of the tubercle bacillus. He made many attempts to cultivate the leprosy bacillus in a wide variety of cells and tissues, the bacilli having been derived from different types of leprosy. His lack of success in this field led him to investigate the viability of the bacilli in biopsy material, both by studies on bacillary metabolism (in collaboration with the late Professor R. F. Naylor) and by the morphological appearance of the bacilli in thin sections as seen under the electron microscope. He subsequently investigated the role of the lysosomes, described earlier by De Duve and his colleagues in Louvain, in the extensive destruction of intracellular leprosy bacilli. He was the first to show by cytochemical and electron-microscopical studies that lysosomes were involved in cellular defence in leprosy. His interests extended widely throughout the fields of cell biology and bacteriology. His tremendous enthusiasm for these research activities found their inspiration in his deep compassion for those suffering from the diseases to the study of which he devoted his life.

We are indebted to Miss Jennifer M. Allen for the substance of this notice.