

OBITUARY

By the death of Henry George Watkins at the age of twenty-five, there has passed an explorer of the first rank, just as the world at large was beginning to realise that in polar exploration, as in other walks of life, there may occasionally arise a figure, which, in spite of youth, leaps to the forefront as of right.

Yet it is rare to find in polar chronicles such a combination of daring with caution, of wisdom with youth, and of modesty with leadership as was the case in the person of the young man always known to his companions as "Gino." Full recognition of his genius for the work he undertook is to be read in the press references to him after his death, and the same genius is evident between the lines of the official account of his last expedition, *Northern Lights*, written by four of his companions on that venture. Implicit in its pages is the feeling of his fellows that, though the plans of their leader were sometimes so bold as to excite question, they would always feel safe provided he was with them to carry them out.

On account of his youth, and his long absences from England, there are but few who can count themselves fortunate enough to have been familiar with his clear cut features, his alert mind, his shy manner, and his spirit of eagerness in whatever he undertook. To the rest of the world he must remain a rather mythical figure, but even so all must join in the great regret that death has come upon one who had accomplished so much, yet who promised so much more.

By a strange fate, one of Watkins' two companions in his famous boat journey, Captain Percy Lemon, died within a month or so of his leader. He was an officer of the Royal Corps of Signals, and was responsible in Watkins' absence for the administration of the Headquarters in East Greenland.

We also record with regret the death, in New Zealand, of Mr H. T. Ferrar, the geologist of Captain Scott's *Discovery* Expedition from 1901-4. It fell to him to be the first to disclose the structure of the Ross Sea Sector of the Antarctic, and he never lost interest either in the region or in the men who followed in his footsteps.

Mention must be made in these pages of the well-known traveller and geologist, Professor J. W. Gregory, who, in company with Sir Martin Conway and Professor Garwood, made an important journey in Spitsbergen in the early days of his career; and of Admiral Umberto Cagni, who was second-in-command of the Duke of Abruzzi's *Stella Polare* Expedition of 1899-1900. Besides the loss of Dr H. K. E. Kruger and Mr R. A. Bjare referred to elsewhere in this issue, we have to record the death of Dr Lebedev, a geophysicist at the Soviet station on Novaya Zemlya, who lost his life in a snow-storm.