

## OBITUARIES

## Prof. F. K. Richtmyer

THE death of Prof. Floyd K. Richtmyer on November 7 has removed a notable figure from scientific circles in the United States. Born in 1881, he graduated at Cornell, most of his academic life being spent as a member of the staff of this same University. His doctoral dissertation was on the subject of photo-electric phenomena, and studies on physical photometry occupied several years of research, during which time he worked under the guidance of E. L. Nichols.

During the War of 1914-18 the urgent need of optical information and instruction in connexion with the development of military instruments and with numerous problems of vision not only led to the rapid growth of the Optical Society in London but also to the foundation of a strong sister society in America. Dr. Richtmyer, appointed in 1918 to a full professorship at Cornell, was a leading figure in the American Society from the beginning, and played a most important part in the subsequent development of the American Institute of Physics.

At various times he was elected to the presidency of the Optical Society of America, the American Physical Society, and the American Association of Physics Teachers. He was associate editor of the *Journal of the Optical Society* from 1917 onwards, and in 1932 he became editor-in-chief of the *Journal* and the *Review of Scientific Instruments*. In the same year, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Anyone who knows the characteristically friendly meetings of the Optical Society of America, held fairly frequently at various centres in the States, will fully appreciate the careful organization that must have been carried out by a group of which Richtmyer was one of the leading figures. His careful and thorough work as editor of the *Journal* has benefited many who appreciate the high standard which is maintained in its pages. Perhaps he is best known to present-day students of physics through his text-book "Introduction to Modern Physics", in which his great gifts as a teacher and expositor are reflected.

In recent years Richtmyer had many administrative duties at Cornell, that most pleasant of universities with its tree-shaded campus high above the blue waters of the Seneca Lake, but he found time to direct the studies of a class of graduate students in a laboratory where the atmosphere is progressive and stimulating. His chief recent interests lay in the fields of X-rays and spectroscopy, and many papers have borne witness to his thoroughness and care in experimental work.

The many in the United States who relied on Richtmyer's judgment and experience will miss him greatly and their regret will be shared by many in Great Britain who had the privilege of meeting him.

L. C. MARTIN.

## Mr. G. Herbert Nall

THE death of Mr. G. Herbert Nall at the age of seventy-nine years occurred on January 14. Mr. Nall was educated at Shrewsbury and at Queen's College, Oxford, where he took a second class in Classical Moderations (1881) and in Lit. Hum. (1884). He was appointed lecturer in Queen's College in 1884 and was classical master and librarian at Westminster during 1886-1922. He was housemaster of the Home Boarders from 1895 and edited many books of the classics for use in schools.

As well as being a classical scholar, Mr. Nall had a bent for natural history which was developed by angling in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries while he was at Westminster. After he retired he took up the scientific investigation of the life of freshwater fish and in particular of sea trout and trout. Working under the auspices of the Fishery Board for Scotland (now the Fisheries Division of the Scottish Home Department) he applied the technique of scale reading to, and became the recognized authority on, this species. As his work developed, it became clear that the life-story of the sea trout was more complicated and liable to greater variations than that of the salmon, and if a true picture was to be obtained an extended and detailed investigation would be necessary. This laborious task Mr. Nall attacked wholeheartedly. In spite of the size of the undertaking he was never daunted by detail and never thought any trouble too great in order to be sure of his material or of the facts which he elicited from it. His main work was in Scotland, but in addition he did much in England and Wales: he also did not omit Ireland and certain European countries from the scope of his survey. He finished his fortieth paper (publication of which will unfortunately be delayed by the War) for the Scottish fishery department a few minutes before he died. Many other papers by him were published in various journals. His latest work did nothing to disturb his conclusions reached a few years ago, and his "Life of the Sea Trout" will for long remain the standard work on that subject. It is not too much to say that our very complete knowledge of the life-history of the sea trout is due almost entirely to his efforts.

In the death of Mr. Nall, freshwater fishery research in Great Britain, and particularly in Scotland, has lost an enthusiastic and painstaking worker who has accomplished much. In his passing those who knew him have lost a quiet, humble soul and one who never failed to help others.

We regret to announce the death of Sir Gilbert Morgan, O.B.E., F.R.S., formerly director of chemical research, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, on February 1.