OBITUARIES

Dr. Alfred Young, F.R.S.

ALFRED YOUNG, the fifth son of Edward Young of Birchfield, Farnworth, a prosperous Liverpool merchant of his time, was born in 1873 and died on December 19, 1940. His death is a loss not only to the parish of Birdbrook, where he was rector, and to many friends, but also to the wider scientific world in which as a pure mathematician he had won a distinguished place.

Educated at Monckton Combe School, Young gained a scholarship in mathematics at Clare College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1892. It was there that I first met him and began a friendship which continued throughout his life. As an undergraduate he took part quietly in the ordinary social and athletic life of the College. A pupil of the celebrated mathematical coach Webb, of St. John's College, he took his B.A. degree in 1895, being bracketed 10th wrangler in a year which included the names of Bromwich, Grace, Whittaker, Hopkinson and Godfrey. It was early in his third year that his interest in research began; his enthusiasm for it diverted him from the subjects laid down for the Tripos examination. His place in the lists would almost certainly have been higher if he had confined his energies to the schedules; undoubtedly, however, he chose the better path.

Young had always intended to take Holy Orders, but it was not until 1908 that he was ordained. In the meantime, he continued his mathematical research; he was the author of many papers in the scientific journals, and collaborated with Grace in "The Algebra of Invariants" published by the Cambridge University Press—the standard work on the subject. For some years he lectured at Selwyn College, but resigned that appointment shortly after his election to a fellowship at Clare in 1904. His work received recognition when in 1908 he was accepted for the degree of Sc.D. at Cambridge, in 1931 when he became honorary LL.D. of St. Andrews, and further in 1934 when he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. This latter honour he shared with his elder brother Sydney Young, professor of mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin. Prof. H. W. Turnbull tells me that "as Young developed his method of Quantitative Substitutional Analysis he was led to the study of the Theory of Finite Groups of which Burnside and Frobenius were the leading exponents. In Group Theory Young was a worthy successor to Burnside; as an algebraist he stood in the front line, and in sheer algebraical manipulation he possessed an insight which can only be described as uncanny".

Young served after his ordination for two years as a curate of Christchurch, Blacklands, and was then presented by his College to the rectory of Birdbrook. His good work as a parish priest led to his appointment in 1923 to the rural deanery of Belchamp and to an honorary canonry at Chelmsford shortly before

his death. He was an excellent preacher; a sermon of his at the Commemoration of Benefactors at Clare stood out among many such discourses to which I have listened, as admirable both in substance and in style.

Young had a quiet humour. I remember an occasion when he said to me with a grave face: "I have lost all sense of personal security". It appeared that the maidservant at his Cambridge lodgings had used some of his manuscripts to light the fire rather than waste clean paper for that purpose.

He was married in 1907 to Edith, daughter of Edward Wilson of Eccleshall, by whom he is survived. There were no children of the marriage.

G. H. A. WILSON.

Dr. G. E. Vincent

THE last public appearance in London of Dr. George Edgar Vincent, president of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1917 until 1929, who died in New York on February 1, was at a luncheon given to him at the Criterion Restaurant on May 18, 1932, by the English-Speaking Union. He was a tall bronzed man of sturdy figure, expressive in countenance and eager-eyed. Talking upon the broad subject of international philanthropy in international relations, Vincent revealed himself as an amiable and persuasive character, more French than Anglo-Saxon in the rapidity and preciseness of his thoughts, as if he feared he would have not quite time enough to say all he wanted to say. It was clear to his audience that here was a man who in his day had convinced many listeners, both individual and collective.

Vincent was born in Illinois, but like many middle-westerners of the abler sort, was educated at Yale. Returning to Chicago, he taught sociology in its university. In the long vacations he joined the Chautauqua Institution, which gave lectures upon literary and scientific subjects, lectures held in tents, in many parts of the country. This varied experience with students well fitted Vincent to become Dean at Chicago (1907), then president of the neighbouring University of Minnesota (1911). His first connexion with charitable trusts was three years later; he joined the General Education Board, endowed not long before to assist American universities.

But at Minnesota, where he continued, Vincent put a strong hand to the expansion of its post-graduate schools of law, medicine, chemistry, engineering, and agriculture. Minnesota is one of the richest of American western universities, which draws large income from copper mines owned near Lake Superior, and Vincent, with such backing, found his opportunity. Meanwhile, so impressive was the counsel which he was offering to the General Education Board, that in the midst of the last war, in 1917, he was invited to the presidency of the Rockefeller Foundation.

Vincent had long been distressed over the meagreness of academic salaries. Many abler young graduates