

OBITUARIES

Dr. G. W. M. Findlay

THE sudden death of George William Marshall Findlay on March 14 at the early age of fifty-nine has deprived the world of an outstanding virologist. He appeared to be in full vigour to the last, when he was deeply immersed in researches on poliomyelitis and other virus diseases. He was born in Warwickshire, and was educated at Dean Close School and the University of Edinburgh. He served with great distinction in both World Wars, in the first as a surgeon lieutenant, in the second as brigadier and consulting physician. He began his career as lecturer in pathology in the University of Edinburgh, then joined the staff of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, and in 1929 went to the Wellcome Research Institute, where his reputation became finally established. After the Second World War, he took the surprising step of becoming editor of *Abstracts of World Medicine* and of *World Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, a full-time appointment for an ordinary man, but for Findlay, merely a useful adjunct to his laboratory work, which he continued in accommodation provided by the Pharmaceutical Society.

Findlay's talents were of two kinds: an avid mind absorbed at remarkable speed all the literature, however remote, relating to his subjects, and converted it into clear expositions like his "Recent Advances in Chemotherapy", now half-way through its third edition, or general articles like "The Virus and the Cell", published recently in the *Journal of the Royal Microscopical Society*. He had been president

of this Society, and had edited its journal for many years. His second talent was his research ability, and an endless curiosity left him never satisfied—in almost his last paper, he recalls the scientific paradox that the fuller our knowledge of a subject the larger becomes the unknown field of our ignorance. His most notable work was on yellow fever: preparation of vaccine, the distribution of immunity in man and animals in Africa, and studies on the virus. He carried out fundamental research on rift valley fever, fowl pest, lymphocytic choriomeningitis, and lately on the Coxsackie virus. During the Second World War, he made interesting observations on blackwater fever and malaria, the sickling phenomenon, and on tropical typhus on West African natives.

Findlay's work led him far afield, to the United States, Africa and to Europe. He much valued his associations with the Pasteur Institute and France, and the tragic death in 1949 of his collaborator, Stephanopoulos, was a heavy blow. Findlay is survived by a widow and two daughters.

P. C. C. GARNHAM

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. E. H. Farmer, F.R.S., formerly assistant director of research, British Rubber Producers' Research Association, on April 13, aged sixty-two.

Mr. J. E. Hodgson, honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, author of "History of Aeronautics in Great Britain from the Earliest Times to the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century" (1924), on April 10.

NEWS and VIEWS

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge:

Sir Will Spens, C.B.E.

SIR WILL SPENS, Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is to retire in August. Sir Will's connexion with the University of Cambridge has been long and close. He was in residence as an undergraduate at King's College in 1901, was elected Fellow of Corpus Christi College in 1907, Tutor in 1912, and Master in 1927. He has been prominent in University as well as in College affairs, for in 1923 he was a member of the Statutory Commission for the University of Cambridge which drafted the statutes by which the University is still largely governed, and was Vice-Chancellor during 1931-33. He served on the Royal Commission for the University of Durham in 1934, was chairman of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire during 1934-38, and was regional commissioner for Civil Defence in the Eastern Region during the War. He was chairman of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools which issued its famous report in 1939. From 1946 until 1948 he presided over the interdepartmental committees on the remuneration of general medical practitioners, consultants and specialists, and dental practitioners. He is also chairman of the governing body of Rugby School. With this record of public service, Sir Will Spens has exerted a notable influence in academic circles. He has been a distinguished head of a House for twenty-five years and has helped to guide the University in a period of change and

stress. On the larger world of education he has also left his mark, most recently as chairman of the committee on the remuneration of consultants and specialists, the recommendations of which were designed equitably to adjust the conditions of service of medical specialists on transition from independent to national service and which indirectly affected the entire teaching staffs of the universities of Great Britain.

Sir George Thomson, F.R.S.

SIR GEORGE THOMSON, who is to succeed Sir Will Spens as Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, became head of the Department of Physics, Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, in 1930. He came from the chair of natural philosophy in Aberdeen, with a remarkable record of achievement in such diverse fields of experimental physics as aerodynamics, the conduction of electricity in gases and electron dynamics. Thomson's experimental proof of the wave-like behaviour of moving electrons will, with its profound and revolutionary effect on scientific outlook, rank as one of the great key experiments in physics. By recording photographically the directions into which an electron beam is scattered on passing through thin films of matter, Thomson not only established the validity of de Broglie's ideas for reconciling the wave and particle aspects of radiation, but, with characteristic insight, was also quick to realize that he had provided means for the direct study of the atomic structure of thin films and surfaces. To-day, the electron-diffraction camera is as indispensable in the well-equipped