

## OBITUARIES

## Sir Ernest Barker, F.B.A.

THE death on February 17 of Sir Ernest Barker, at the age of eighty-five, means not only the loss of a great scholar and teacher but also the loss of a symbol of what may well seem, in 1960, to have been a happier and more confident world. Ernest Barker always denied being a 'scholar' in the old-fashioned Oxford and Cambridge classical sense. But all that that meant was that he was not one of the elaborately skilful composers in the ancient tongues whom Macaulay (who himself was a master of these dexterities) made fun of. Barker was a very distinguished product of the Oxford 'Greats' school. I suspect that he never lost his conviction, even after many happy years in Cambridge, that for the statesman and for the teacher of statesmen the school of *Litterae Humaniores* was the ideal education.

It would be both absurd and unjust to suggest that Barker was an old-fashioned classic incapable of understanding or appreciating the contributions of more modern studies to the science (or as he would have preferred, I think, to put it) the art of politics. He preserved into his old age a great deal of curiosity about modern developments and modern contributions. But it would be also absurd to pretend that he was ever convinced that the modern American statistical analysts of political behaviour and, still more, the modern psychological explainers of political behaviour, have really improved on the study and explanation of the human situation provided by Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Barker wrote a great many books, all of them meritorious and some very remarkable. His essay on "The Crusades" for the "Encyclopædia Britannica", published as a little book, seems as remarkable to me now as it seemed when, as an undergraduate in Oxford, I had my attention directed to it by the late B. H. Sumner. In his old age he wrote what I am told was an extremely competent book on Byzantium. But I think that his greatest achievement was his "Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle"—a book full of learning and wisdom. I once reproached him for not producing a new edition and almost coaxed him into an admission that he had wasted a good deal of time on less-important things. He did, in fact, produce a new volume on Plato, but never finished the complete revision of this masterpiece. He spent (or, as I think, wasted) an immense amount of learning on a translation of Gierke, which involved the resuscitation of a great many rightfully forgotten Germans. 'C'était magnifique', but it was not what we wanted from Ernest Barker. I think he came to feel this, for he does not cite this laborious and learned and in some ways useful work in "Who's Who".

Barker was a Liberal (both upper case and lower case letters), and that comes out in the admirable little volume he wrote in the Home University Library on English political thought "From Herbert Spencer to To-day" and in his "Principles of Social and Political Theory". He would never have understood that it was possible to separate politics from morals, to reduce politics to statistical description. As much as Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, he would have held that the

idea of ethically neutral means was nonsense. Politics was about ethics. If this were not true, it was not worth serious study.

Barker was not only a man of prodigious learning, he was also a man of prodigious energy. At an age when most people think of retirement as a reality, nearly ten years after he had ceased to be professor of political science in Cambridge, he went to Germany, out of a strong sense of mission, to rehabilitate the lost German tradition of academic freedom. It was a task that might have daunted a younger man, and he suffered a very serious illness from which, some think, he never quite recovered, although he continued to work with an energy that would have shamed many men much younger than he was.

In addition to immense intellectual and physical energy, Barker was extremely handsome and had a most magnificent voice, which was made even more effective as it preserved its northern burr. There is a tradition in Peterhouse that he imagined he had lost this burr. Fortunately there was no basis for this illusion. He not only had an academic career of great distinction, but also one of great variety. From Manchester Grammar School he went to Balliol and was successively Fellow of Merton, St. John's, and New College, where he had a most admiring pupil in the late Harold Laski. He was, for a short and not very happy time, principal of King's College, London, and then he was, for a very long and happy time, the first professor of political science in Cambridge and Fellow of Peterhouse. In contemplating Ernest Barker it was easy to think of him as a relic of a dead past. But it was much wiser to think of him as a representative of a great past, of the disciples of T. H. Green (and of Henry Sedgwick), of the moralistic and learned political philosophers of a great era of modern English history. He survived into what he must have thought—and did think—was an evil and distracted world. But he continued to be loyal to both his theory and practice. If sometimes he seemed unreceptive to new ideas, he was totally above the temptations of fashion or current academic prestige. "We shall not look upon his like again."

D. W. BROGAN

## Dr. Hsien Wu

DR. HSIEN WU, an authority on blood analysis, died on August 8, 1959. He was born in Foochow, China, on November 24, 1893. He attended a local high school in Foochow and then enrolled in the naval architecture course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After two years, he changed his course to chemistry and was awarded the B.S. degree by the Institute in 1916. After remaining as an assistant in the Department of Chemistry for a year at the Institute, he entered Harvard Medical School in 1917 for graduate study with Dr. Otto Folin in the Department of Biological Chemistry, and received the Ph.D. degree in June, 1919. He continued his researches as a Fellow with Dr. Folin for a further year.

In 1920, Dr. Wu returned to China as assistant in biochemistry at Peiping Union Medical College. After one year, he was raised to an associate and