tion, gave a clear impression of Czechoslovakia's cultural and scientific progress during the first decade of its independence.

Next, Ulehla turned his attention to the production of educational and cultural films, and those depicting the colourful peasant life and scenery of south-east Moravia, where the Slovak inhabitants cling to their traditional dress and old customs and folklore, were particularly successful.

In addition to his duties at Brno University, Ulehla was from 1928 until 1939 scientific correspondent of the daily *Lidové Noviny*, and he resumed this work in 1945 when the journal reappeared as *Svobodné Noviny*. J. G. F. D.

We regret to announce the following deaths :

Sir Albert Howard, C.I.E., Imperial economic botanist to the Government of India during 1905–24, director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore, during 1924–31, on October 20, aged seventy-four.

Dr. Ellsworth Huntington, formerly research associate in geography, Yale University, an authority on the effect of climate on human racial development, on October 16, aged seventy-one.

NEWS and VIEWS

Physiology at Charing Cross Hospital Medical School : Prof. William Burns

Prof. W. Burns, recently appointed to the chair of physiology at Charing Cross Hospital Medical School, London, is a graduate in science and medicine of the University of Aberdeen. He received his early education at the Mackie Academy, Stonehaven, whence he entered the University in 1930. Having graduated B.Sc. in 1932 and M.B., Ch.B. in 1935, he was appointed to an assistantship in the Department of Physiology, and in 1938 became senior lecturer. As a teacher and demonstrator, Burns brought to an orderliness of thought and expression the valuable gift of artistic skill in illustration. Prof. Burns' first interest in research work centred around the problems of carbohydrate and cardiac metabolism, but it soon became manifest that his chief interests lay in the realm of the biophysical. Until 1942 he was engaged in investigating activity in afferent nerves associated with the viscera. The results of this work were incorporated in a thesis for which he was awarded the D.Sc. degree.

Early in 1942, Prof. Burns' biophysical and technical interests suggested a potential usefulness in the war effort, and in that year he was called to the Admiralty. After a period of service at the Admiralty research laboratory, he was appointed physiologist on the staff of the headquarters of the Royal Naval Scientific Service and latterly was placed in charge of the Royal Naval Physiological Laboratory. During the period of his war service, he was engaged on various problems such as the application of acoustics, the habitability of submarines, operational considerations affecting special equipment in warships, etc. In the latter years of his Admiralty service, he was also responsible for liaison between the Royal Naval Scientific Service headquarters and the activities of the Royal Naval Personnel Research Committee of the Medical Research Council, in which the latter is associated with the Admiralty in dealing with problems involving the relationship of man to the various duties and types of environments imposed by the requirements of the Navy.

Walter Holbrook Gaskell (1847–1914)

One hundred years ago, on November 1, 1847, Walter Holbrook Gaskell was born at Naples. Gaskell was a physiologist to whom medicine continues to owe a deep and lasting debt. He was a mathematician by training, and on Michael Foster's advice he went in 1874 to Leipzig to Ludwig's laboratory, in those days the most important centre of physiological research in Europe. On his return he took up physiology as a career, being appointed lecturer at Cambridge in 1883. Gaskell laid the secure foundation for our knowledge of the pathology of the heart and of the autonomic nervous system. In a series of ingenious and conclusive experiments he showed that the beat of the heart is due to automatic rhythmic contractions of the heart muscle and to the wave of excitation flowing from sinus venosus to bulbus arteriosus and from muscle fibre to muscle fibre. By his zigzag incisions of heart muscle he proved the continuity of the rhythmic wave. He introduced the terms and conceptions 'heart block', 'fibrillation', and 'gallop-rhythm' into the literature, and was one of the pioneers in the galvanometric investigation of the heart. In 1890, at the request of the Hyderabad Commission, he investigated the action of chloroform. His fascinating book "The Origin of Vertebrates" appeared in 1908. As a lecturer Gaskell was popular and inspiring, though he was not eloquent. A big man physically and intellectually, his strength and his weakness lay in his love of generalizations, which sometimes led him to victory and as often led him astray. He died on September 7, 1914, in his sixty-seventh year.

George Green, 1793–1841

As a mathematician, George Green is among the immortals ; as a man he sank back almost at the moment of his death into the obscurity from which he had startlingly emerged. From a volume of studies published in 1946 as a tribute to George Sarton, Mr. Gwynedd Green, of University College, Nottingham, has separated a biography of the miller-scholar who graduated as fourth wrangler at the age of forty-four, nine years after the private publication of an incomparable masterpiece. Property is located, wills are transcribed, correspondence between Kelvin and Crelle is reproduced, and there are notes on every traceable name in Green's family tree and on all but eight of the fifty-two subscribers to the printing of the famous "Essay" ; bibliographical information is thorough, but mention should surely have been made of the collected edition of Green's papers which was prepared by Ferrers for Caius in 1871 and reproduced photographically in Paris in 1903. The circumstances of Green's life both in Nottingham and at Cambridge have been investigated once for all from local sources with an industry beyond praise, and if a condescending patron and a resentful daughter are more vivid in the story than the central figure himself, this is because no contemporary portrait or character sketch has been found and the author does not attempt imaginary reconstructions. It is sad to learn from a note added in manuscript that the mill in which Green laboured and studied was reduced to a shell by fire in July last.