practically unobservable particle—to account for the variable amounts of energy missing in beta-disintegrating processes. The theory was immediately successful: it accounted for most of the facts then known and predicted new ones which were duly verified. Some refinements—which fitted naturally into the original framework—were added later, and it is now certain that Fermi's theory gives a correct account of all aspects of the beta-process—the mutual transformation of protons and neutrons—though the place of this process in the general scheme of things is still one of the main mysteries of to-day's physics.

After the War, Fermi returned to academic work at the University of Chicago. The atomic piles he had created were powerful sources of neutrons, and he used them in the experimental attack on fundamental problems, in particular that of the interaction of neutrons and electrons. But he did not neglect theory: his work on the origin of the cosmic radiation (1947), on the production of multiple mesons (1950) and on the interpretation of meson-scattering experiments at the big new synchro-cyclotron was witness to the unabated vigour of his mind.

Born in 1901, Enrico Fermi was quick in establishing his position: professor in Rome by 1928, member of the Accademia d'Italia in 1929, Nobel Prize in 1938. Since 1938 he had lived in the United States, with his wife and two children.

Fermi's strength was not subtlety or high-flown imagination, but strong common sense combined with perfect mastery of his subject. No vagueness or mysticism for him: the essence of his work was clarity. His papers were written in a style so crystal-clear that the tremendous intellectual effort which had created them was out of sight. His lectures were perfectly planned and delivered with the skill and humour of a showman. His personality, unassuming yet dominant, often provocative but always tolerant, forceful and yet easy-going, will be remembered by all who met him. His joy of living was contagious, and his death is a great loss both to the world of physics and to his many friends all over the world.

O. R. FRISCH

NEWS and VIEWS

Directorship of the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens: Dr. H. R. Fletcher

DR. H. R. FLETCHER, director of the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley, has been appointed to succeed Dr. J. M. Cowan as assistant to the Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Dr. Fletcher graduated at Manchester in 1929 and in the same year was appointed assistant lecturer in botany in the University of Aberdeen under the late Prof. Craib. There he became interested in taxonomy, especially in the flora of Siam. After taking the degree of doctor of philosophy, he was appointed to the staff of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, in 1934. There he continued his work on the Siamese flora and graduated doctor of science in 1939. In collaboration with Sir William Wright Smith he has published a long series of papers on the sections of the genus *Primula* in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, the *Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh* and in the *Journal of the Linnean Society*. Then followed a revision of the genus *Omphalogramma* and numerous articles in scientific and horticultural journals on the genera *Codonopsis*, *Cremanthodium*, *Aconitum*, *Potentilla* and *Incarvillea*. In 1951 Dr. Fletcher left Edinburgh to become director at Wisley. After some four years there, he is again strongly attracted to the line of work he pursued for so long at Edinburgh and is returning there shortly.

Mr. F. P. Knight

MR. F. P. KNIGHT, who is to succeed Dr. Fletcher as director at the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens, is a Devonian, fifty-two years of age, who commenced his horticultural career in 1915 at Werrington Park, Launceston, Cornwall, at that time owned by Mr. J. C. Williams, who did so much to support George Forrest in his botanical exploration work in Western China. During 1919–23 Mr. Knight was a probationer gardener in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, where he worked mainly in the Propagating Department, and helped with the experimental work on plant propagation from cuttings. The experience gained laid the foundation of Mr. Knight's favourite branch of horticulture. After a period of nearly two years as a student gardener at Kew, he was for four years in charge of the Arboretum nurseries there. This was followed by a period with Messrs. Baker's, of Codsall, Wolverhampton, where he specialized in the commercial production of large quantities of rock garden plants, and also supervised the firm's landscape planting activities for two years. He then went to Knap Hill Nursery, Ltd., Woking. In 1940 Mr. Knight was appointed horticultural officer to the Directorate of Camouflage, Ministry of Home Security, becoming senior officer as the work developed. In April 1944 Mr. Knight joined Messrs. R. C. Notcutt's Nursery, Woodbridge, as general manager, and in 1945 was appointed managing director. Mr. Knight has been active in the Royal Horticultural Society, serving on the Society's Floral Committee and the Camellia and Rhododendron Committee. He has been a member for several years of the Technical Sub-Committee of the Roads Beautifying Association.

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene: Awards

THE following awards were recently presented at a meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene:

LePrince Award to Prof. B. G. Maegraith, professor of tropical medicine in the University of Liverpool. The award consisted of a medal and a prize of 500 dollars contributed by the Michigan Chemical Co. Mr. J. A. LePrince, after whom the award is named, also received the medal, which had not been struck at the time he was first honoured by the National Malaria Society.

Bailey K. Ashford Award for research on chemotherapy of malaria and amœbiasis to Dr. Joseph Greenberg, of the Laboratory of Tropical Diseases, National Microbiological Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. The award is given to a scientist less than thirty-five years of age and consists of a medal and a prize of 1,000 dollars, furnished by Eli Lilly and Co., Indianapolis, Indiana.