OBITUARIES

Sir John Parsons, C.B.E., F.R.S.

JOHN HERBERT PARSONS, who died on October 7, was born in 1868. He was educated at the University of Bristol, where he won many distinctions, and at University College, London. In 1890 he obtained the B.Sc. (Lond.) with honours in physiology. This subject remained his main interest, especially that part of it which concerned visual and cerebral function.

He qualified from St. Batholomew's Hospital in 1892 with the M.B. (Lond.). In 1900 he obtained the B.S. (Lond.) and the F.R.C.S. Eng. In 1901 he was granted a British Medical Association Scholarship and in 1904 obtained the D.Sc. (Lond.).

Parsons decided to become an ophthalmic surgeon, and his first appointment was as curator and librarian to the Royal London Ophthalmic (Moorfields Eye) Hospital. In this post he had control of the pathological laboratory and there laid the foundation and did the necessary research for his great work, "Pathology of the Eye", published during 1904–8. This became the standard work on this subject, and even to-day is a much-used work of reference.

In due course he became surgeon to the Moorfields Eye Hospital and ophthalmic surgeon to University College Hospital and also for a while to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London.

Parsons's private practice was carried on at 54, Queen Anne Street, in the house previously occupied by his senior colleague, Mr. Marcus Gunn. The practice grew rapidly, but in spite of this and his ordinary work at the hospitals, he continued his laboratory and research work. In 1903 he was Arris and Gale lecturer at the Royal College of Surgeons. In 1904 he was awarded the Middlemore Prize in ophthalmology and in 1907 the Nettleship Gold Medal. In 1907 he published a small text-book, "Diseases of the Eye". This became very popular, and its tenth edition appeared in 1942.

In the last years of the First World War he was appointed consulting ophthalmic surgeon to the Army in the United Kingdom, and was given the rank of colonel A.M.S., with the task of co-ordinating and regulating the ophthalmic work of the Army. The result was as perfect an eye service as could be managed with the available resources.

All this special knowledge was of use to various ministries and institutions. In 1919 he served on the Advisory Committee of the Air Ministry and in 1922 at the Admiralty; at the Board of Trade on various subjects—sight tests, factory lighting, prevention of blindness; and on the Royal Society's Committee on Glass Workers Cataract. In 1928–32 he was a member of the Medical Research Council. In 1919 he was appointed C.B.E., and in 1922 he was knighted.

In 1919 he was president of the Illuminating Engineering Society and many will remember his inaugural address on "Glare".

In 1917 the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* was founded by the amalgamation of several small publications, and Parsons became the chairman of the editorial board. He devoted much time to this, and it is due to him that this journal obtained and maintained such a very high standard. He continued this work until his retirement from practice in 1939.

In 1936 he was awarded the Howe Medal (United States), and this was a tribute to his international standing as a scientific ophthalmologist. It was during these years that many honours came to him—Hon. LL.D. Edin., Hon. D.Sc. Bristol, Fellow of University College, London, Fellow and president of the Royal Society of Medicine, president of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, honorary member of the American Medical Association and of the Australian Ophthalmological Society. Then came the theoretical books, "Mind and the Nation" in 1918 and "Introduction to the Study of Colour Vision". These earned him election to the Royal Society in 1921, and in that year came the "Introduction to the Theory of Perception", which set the seal on his eminence as a philosopher and scientist.

Parsons was a tall, thin man, very modest, rather shy, and he eschewed publicity. He appreciated economy in the use of words, and this sometimes made his published works difficult to follow. He was a shrewd judge of people, no respecter of persons and possessed a mordant wit. The outstanding feature of his character was his intellectual honesty: no hypocrisy, no humbug, no attempt at placating people, no dubious compromises and no pretence. Altogether a life devoted to science and to the welfare of humanity. A. HAROLD LEVY

Dr. Kathleen M. Drew

THE death of Dr. Kathleen M. Drew (Mrs. Wright Baker) on September 14 has brought to a tragically early close a career of distinguished and devoted work in phycology in the very difficult field of the red algae. Most of this work was associated with the Department of Cryptogamic Botany in the University of Manchester, where she graduated in 1922, and later worked as a member of staff and as research fellow, first with Prof. W. H. Lang and later with Prof. C. W. Wardlaw; she received the degree of D.Sc. of the University of Manchester in 1939. Dr. Drew was one of the earliest of the Commonwealth Research Fellows and spent two years in the United States, chiefly at the University of California, where some of her early systematic studies on the red algae culminated in the publication of her monograph, "A Revision of the Genera *Chantransia*, *Rhodochorton*, and *Acrochaetium*"; in later studies of this period of her work, for example, on *Spermothamnion* and *Plumaria*, she developed the cytological techniques which formed a basic part of her later work.

After her marriage with Prof. H. Wright Baker, she maintained and developed her interests in the red algae with singular success alongside those of her very happy family life. With the publication in 1944 in *Biological Reviews* of her review on the nuclear and somatic phases in the Florideae, she set the stage for the later developments in her work, where she made notable advances in linking morphological and cytological observations with cultural and physiological investigations into the life-histories and inter-relationships in the Rhodophyceae, that most varied and interesting group of algae. Perhaps one of the most striking results of this experimental attack was the identification of *Conchocelis rosea* as

a deep-water, shell-inhabiting phase in the life-history of *Porphyra umbilicalis*, on which she was preparing a further series of investigations.

Dr. Drew's numerous publications have appeared in many scientific journals. She was planning to start work on a book; and though we shall not now have this wider expression of her views, it is indeed fortunate that from time to time she had written articles such as those which have appeared in the *Botanical Review*, *Biological Reviews*, *Phytomorphology*, and in the chapter which she contributed to the "Manual of Phycology", which have reviewed the contemporary position as she interpreted it for the field which she had made so notably her own. She was a familiar figure at international congresses and meetings, which she often attended as an invited speaker.

Dr. Drew was much concerned with the future of phycology in Britain, and felt strongly the need to train younger workers in this field. With this aim in mind, she was one of the prime movers in the formation in 1952 of the British Phycological Society and was its first president. The Society owes much to her enthusiasm and wise guidance during its early years; she was regular in her attendance at its field meetings, and there are many younger botanists who will miss her critical and kindly help on these occasions. For colleagues and research students alike, her place can never be filled. Her work was characterized by outstanding integrity of mind and purpose, and unsparing devotion to the exacting demands of difficult techniques; and these same qualities gave a special value to her advice or help in a variety of fields. To her research students, who came from many parts of the world, Dr. Drew was a stimulating and readily accessible supervisor, as keenly critical of their work as she was of her own; and all of them will have grateful memories of her kindly hospitality and sympathetic friendship.

Mary Calder

NEWS and VIEWS

The Artificial Earth Satellite: Observations at Jodrell Bank

After the Russian announcement of the artificial Earth satellite, emergency arrangements were made at Jodrell Bank Experimental Station (University of Manchester) to bring the steerable radio telescope into action as a radar instrument for the detection of the rocket and satellite. Success was achieved on October 11 when both the rocket and satellite were located by radar. Afterwards, measurements were made on two frequencies, out to ranges limited by the Earth's curvature. In addition to this radar work with the telescope, the radio emissions from the satellite have been studied with interferometric and pencil beam systems. It is hoped to publish a detailed account of this work in the near future.

The Schmiedeberg Award: Dr. E. P. Pick

Dr. Ernest Peter Pick, of the Merck Institute for Therapeutic Research, New York, has received the Schmiedeberg award of the German Pharmacological Society for significant contributions to the progress of pharmacological science. Dr. Pick, who was born in Jaromer, Bohemia, in 1872, and graduated from the German University of Prague in 1896, starting his career as a biochemist in the laboratory of Franz Hofmeister at the Strassburg Physiologico–Chemical Institute. Here Dr. Pick made major contributions to the chemistry of proteins by isolating and characterizing pseudoglobulin and euglobulin, (now known as gamma globulin).

In 1899 he joined the Austrian State Serum-Institut in Vienna, where under Paltauf he became familiar with bacteriology, serology and immunology. It was here that, jointly with Obermeyer, Dr. Pick investigated the chemical properties of antigens and laid the groundwork for Landsteiner's later researches on blood groups. In 1911 Dr. Pick joined Hans Horst Meyer's still young Experimental Pharmacological Institute, where he remained as an assistant until 1924, when he became professor of pharmacology in the University of Vienna. From 1932–33 he was dean of the Vienna Medical Faculty and chief of the Austrian Federal Pharmacological Drug Research Institute.

In 1939 Dr. Pick joined the Merck Institute for Therapeutic Research, which enabled him to continue his scientific research at its laboratories in Rahway, New Jersey. To-day, at eighty-five years of age, he continues as a consultant to the Institute, travelling twice a week to its laboratories to continue his researches, which at present relate to the effect of vitamin B_{12} on cholinesterase. During this period he has also been clinical professor of pharmacology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York City, and associate pharmacologist at the Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. Dr. Pick has made fundamental contributions to research problems in a variety of fields, including the fractionation of proteins, mechanism of shock ('Lebersperre'), and the site of action of hypnotics in the brain.

Edmund Davy, F.R.S. (1785–1857)

Edmund Davy, who died one hundred years ago on November 5, 1857, made many original contributions to chemistry, but his fame has been completely overshadowed by that of his cousin, Sir Humphry Davy. He was born in 1785 at Penzance, where he received his early education. In 1804, through the influence of his cousin, who was the first professor of chemistry and director of the laboratory at the Royal Institution, he was appointed operator and assistant in the chemical laboratory. The director's laboratory book on September 13, 1809, contains this entry: "The laboratory must be cleaned every morning. . . . It is . . . the duty of Mr. E. Davy to see that it is done and to take care of and keep in order the apparatus". In 1813 Edmund became professor of chemistry at the Royal Cork Institution, and in 1825 he was elected to the chair of chemistry at the Royal Dublin Society. His scientific merits were recognized when on retiring after thirty years he was awarded his whole salary. His honours included fellowship of the Royal Society