

member of the Irish Grassland Association; a member of the Agricultural Commission appointed by the Government to examine agricultural development in the late 'thirties; and in general he identified himself with many agricultural developments. He was equally at home with students and scientific audiences, and as a lecturer on behalf of the Royal Dublin Society he became intimately acquainted with and highly appreciated by a wide range of farmers all over the country.

Prof. Caffrey's outspoken manner, genial personality and hearty laugh will long be remembered by all who knew him. He was predeceased by his wife some years ago, and he is survived by three sons and three daughters, for whom the greatest sympathy is felt.

R. MCKAY

Dr. E. J. Holmyard

ERIC JOHN HOLMYARD was born on July 11, 1891, at Midsomer Norton, Somerset, and all his life he was a faithful man of Somerset. He was a scholar of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and after graduation he served as a sixth-form science master at Marlborough College during 1917-19. He then became head of the Science Department at Clifton College, an appointment which he filled with signal success for the twenty years 1920-40. It was at Clifton that his best work was done. In 1941 he became editor of *Endeavour*, retiring in 1954 to live at Clevedon, Somerset. Among his other activities, he was chairman of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry and co-editor of a "History of Technology" in five volumes.

Holmyard, as a teacher, well knew the capacities of young pupils at school, and his books on inorganic and organic chemistry of this standard have deservedly been very popular. They are written in a lucid and attractive style and many readers of this notice must owe their introduction to chemistry to them. In collaboration with F. A. Philbrick, he wrote a more advanced book on theoretical and inorganic chemistry which has also been very successful. All these books present the basic facts of chemistry as an experimental science, relating them to general principles in a way which gives them significance and interest; but the theory is kept in proper proportion, so that those who gained their knowledge from them in the past will now have very little to unlearn.

Dr. Holmyard, who was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, will probably be best remembered for

his profound studies of Muslim chemistry. He was well equipped with a knowledge of Arabic, and in this field he was a recognized authority. He made a special study of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān and the writings attributed to him. He published some Arabic texts, brought to light some little-known works of Jabir, and re-interpreted some which had previously been studied. More recent research has shown that the problem of Jābir is very difficult and much remains to be cleared up, but Holmyard's pioneering work has a permanent value. He showed that the theory which dominated alchemy and early chemistry, that metals are composed of mercury and sulphur, was taught by Jābir, who derived it from a statement in the "Meteorology" of Aristotle.

In collaboration with his pupil at Clifton, Mandeville, Holmyard published the Arabic text and a translation of a work known in Latin as by Avicenna and showed that it is, in fact, part of the genuine *Shifā'* of Ibn Sīnā. This text, which denies the transmutability of species and stigmatizes alchemical gold as fraudulent, was a puzzle in the Middle Ages, when it was thought to be part of the "Meteorology" of Aristotle. Holmyard also edited and translated an alchemical text of Abu'l Qāsim al 'Irāqī. In all these studies he made much use of the writings of Jildaki, available only in manuscripts, and established their value as a source of information on Muslim alchemy. The work in this field by Holmyard completely changed the outlook on Muslim chemistry which prevailed when he began.

Holmyard wrote some excellent small books on the history of chemistry, the best known being his "Makers of Chemistry" and his recently published "Alchemy". These are accurate and authoritative, and it is to be regretted that he did not write a general survey of Muslim chemistry which he was so well qualified to undertake.

Holmyard was modest and unassuming, ready to put his knowledge at the disposal of those who asked it, with a cool and critical outlook in scholarship, expressing himself concisely and avoiding polemics. His learning sat lightly upon him, and for all he cared it could remain unknown in circles incapable of understanding it. He was open and friendly and in whatever company he found himself his quiet charm and delicate sense of humour, wholly free from malice, endeared him. He was a member of Clevedon Golf Club. He died at Clevedon on October 13, and among those who valued his knowledge and friendship his death leaves a vacant place which it will be hard to fill.

J. R. PARTINGTON

NEWS and VIEWS

Royal Society: Award of Royal Medals

H.M. THE QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve recommendations made by the Council of the Royal Society for the award of the two Royal Medals for the current year as follows: to Prof. R. E. Peierls, professor of mathematical physics in the University of Birmingham, for his distinguished work on the theoretical foundations of high energy and nuclear physics; to Prof. P. B. Medawar, Jodrell professor of zoology and comparative anatomy at University College, University of London, for his distinguished contributions in the field of tissue transplantation immunity and acquired tolerance.

Geological Society of London: Foreign Members

The Geological Society of London has elected to foreign membership the following distinguished geologists: Academician V. V. Belousov, of the Academy of Sciences, Moscow, in recognition of his studies on sedimentation and geotectonics; Prof. J. A. Broggi, of Lima, Peru, for his work in the advancement of geological science in Peru and his contributions to Peruvian geology; Academician D. V. Nalivkin, of the Academy of Sciences, Moscow, in recognition of his contributions to the geology of the Soviet Union and especially of his part in the preparation of the recently published geological map