

manner. She became intensely interested in the influence of nutrition on health and made it her especial study. Her husband became interested in it also, and, in addition to his pioneer work on the structure of the proteins, he carried out experiments on the influence of vitamin B on the nutrition of different birds, for example, hens, guinea fowls, turkeys, etc. Prof. and Mrs. Plimmer jointly wrote a book entitled "Food, Health and Vitamins", which was first published in 1925. By 1942 it had reached its ninth edition. In this, they quoted from Browning:

"Man must pass from old to new,  
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,  
From what once seemed good, to what now  
proves best:  
How could man have progression otherwise?"

To discard "what once seemed good" for "what now proves best" has been their guiding principle throughout their scientific writings. Prof. and Mrs. Plimmer wrote "Vitamins and the Choice of Food" in 1922, thus bringing within the reach of everyman knowledge which was then in its very early infancy, the only vitamins then known being A, B and C. Mrs. Plimmer alone produced "Food Values at a Glance" in 1939, which was found to be of very great value to people who had to cater for schools and other large fraternities as well as those who had to feed only a family. Later, in 1941, she wrote "Food Values in Wartime", a most practical and readable book for people who seriously tried to make the best of the war-time rations. To many people, it probably brought the first indication that the choice of food should be guided by influences other than mere taste. A second edition was published in 1943. Mrs. Plimmer's writings must have had a very far-reaching effect on the health of the British people, not only during the War but also in the even harder catering times since it ended. Her readers as well as her many personal friends will miss her kindly and understanding help. KATHARINE H. COWARD

### Mr. F. S. Smythe

THE sudden death on June 27 of Francis Sydney Smythe, the well-known mountaineer and writer, has removed one who for a considerable number of years has brought home to the public in effectual manner both the beauty of great mountains and the supreme adventure of climbing them. This he did in some twenty or more books, apart from numerous articles, relating to the Alps and the Himalayas especially, and it is significant that it was his last visit this year to the beloved Himalayas which was the cause of his decease through infection from some unknown germ.

As a boy Frank Smythe was delicate, and in consequence, after a period at Berkhamsted School, he was sent to Switzerland, where his love of mountains grew to full maturity. There, too, he received some of his training at Zurich as an electrical engineer. But a brief appointment in the Argentine convinced him that engineering was not his *forte*, and he returned to England to engage in a severe struggle to establish himself in article-writing, relating mainly to his Alpine and British mountaineering experiences.

The international expedition to Kangchenjunga in 1930 gave him his first taste of Himalayan mountaineering, out of which experience grew his successful

ascent of Kamet (25,447 ft.) in 1931, and his three attempts on Everest with the expeditions of 1933, 1936 and 1938. In another field, that of the Canadian Rockies, his last success in 1947 was in the pioneer ascent of Mount Lloyd George, in northern British Columbia, where his natural force and skill seemed quite unabated. I was a member of this exploratory expedition and can bear witness, moreover, to Smythe's habitual enthusiasm for the mountain flora, which was found in surprising profusion in that far northern district.

The collecting of mountain plants, particularly in the Himalayas, was the chief adjunct of his climbing enterprises, and as a result many of these plants have been acclimatized and introduced into English gardens, notably his own beautiful one in Sussex. But Kew and Edinburgh were the recipients of many new or rare species, especially from the central Himalayas of Garhwal, whence in the course of one expedition he brought back some 250 varieties. This achievement was described in his book "The Valley of Flowers", published in 1938, which was well illustrated in colour.

As a photographer Smythe was in the first class, and his more recent books were often albums of beautifully artistic subjects and views, with minor text as commentary. He died at the early age of forty-eight, having been twice married, and leaving three sons by the first marriage. N. E. ODELL

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. Charles Day, a past-president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, on June 18, aged eighty-one.

Prof. Ottavio Munerati, director of the Sugar-beet Experimental Station, Rovigo, Italy, on July 18.

Prof. P. E. Newberry, O.B.E., formerly Brunner professor of Egyptology in the University of Liverpool, on August 7, aged eighty.

Sir Frank Stockdale, G.C.M.G., C.B.E., vice-chairman of the Colonial Development Corporation, a leading authority on Colonial agriculture, on August 3, aged sixty-six.

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Earthquake in Ecuador

ON August 5 a great earthquake, immediately followed by two severe and many lesser aftershocks, struck the South American Republic of Ecuador. A preliminary account may now be given though further news from the affected area and from observatories throughout the world is awaited. The area most affected was that lying between the two volcanic peaks of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi. Casualties may be more than nine thousand dead and twenty thousand injured, and damage to property has been estimated at over £5,000,000.

The epicentre was near the towns of Pellileo, Patate and Pillaro, Guano and Salcedo, which are now virtually in ruins. Ambato, some seventy miles south of Quito and once the fifth largest city in Ecuador, famed as an agricultural and commercial centre, has 80 per cent of its buildings down. In particular the cathedral and the Civil Guard barracks were badly damaged and some people inside them at the time killed; water supplies, other public services and communications were cut. Rescue work is pro-