

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY ANNUAL RESEARCH
MEETING, 1964

The sixth Annual Research Meeting will be held on March 20, 1964, at the Toronto General Hospital. The guest speaker, Dr. Paul A. Cibis of St. Louis, Missouri, will discuss problems of retinal detachment and the staff of the department will also present their work.

For further information please write to Dr. P. K. Basu, Director of Ophthalmic Research, Banting Institute, Toronto 2, Canada.

The President of Brazil has conferred the Order of the Southern Cross upon Mr. H. B. Stallard.

OBITUARY

EDGAR FRANK FINCHAM, 1893-1963

With the death on November 21, 1963, of Edgar Fincham, Great Britain has lost her most distinguished authority on physiological optics.

The youngest of three brothers, he was educated at Hornsey County School which he left in 1909, when only 16 years of age, to take a position as laboratory assistant at the Northampton Polytechnic. After a short time there he was employed at Messrs. Newton and Co. and also at Messrs. Carpenter and Westley, and obtained the Diploma of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers in 1914.

In 1915 he volunteered for the R.A.M.C. and after training in the Pathology Laboratory at Millbank was drafted to Macedonia where he remained until 1919. Although only a young man, his keen powers of observation and great experimental skill were already evident and during this period he perfected his histological techniques with the human retina. Some of his photomicrographs (*Photomicrographs of Sections of the Human Eye*, 1925) have never been bettered. He also detected and photographed malarial parasites in the blood vessels of the human retina. For his work in Macedonia he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

At the end of the 1914-18 war he was appointed Lecturer in the Applied Optics Department of the Northampton Polytechnic, where he worked and lectured until 1950. In spite of his heavy teaching responsibilities, this period was a most fruitful one, producing a series of papers on the mechanism of accommodation in the human eye that culminated with his classic monograph published by the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* as Supplement No. 8 in 1937. This year saw also the commercial production of his Coincidence Optometer, an instrument in widespread use for the precise and objective measurement of the refractive state of the eye.

During the second world war he worked on problems of vision for the Admiralty and Air Ministry in association with his brother, W. H. A. Fincham, and with H. H. Emsley.

In 1950 he was invited to start a Research Department in Ophthalmic Optics at the Institute of Ophthalmology. Here, with a much lighter burden of teaching, his research was given full rein, and the period until he left to return to his old love, the Northampton Polytechnic, in 1961, produced a series of important papers on the factors controlling ocular accommodation, the stimulus to the accommodation reflex, and the reciprocal actions of accommodation and convergence.

During his life Edgar Fincham received many honours. He was Commander of the Order of St. John, the only honorary recipient of the Higher Diploma of the Spectacle Makers' Company, and a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. He was the first Wiseman Memorial Lecturer; he also gave the Ettles and Owen Aves Lectures, and was awarded the Ernest Aves Medal by the London Refraction Hospital "for work of outstanding merit in ophthalmic optics".

Scientist, artist, photographer and teacher, Edgar Fincham was all of these. Every Christmas his friends were the delighted recipients of one of his beautifully drawn etchings.