

could compile special reports: "The Board found that those who were still in their academic settings managed to find time for something within their competence which was directly concerned with the war. Once a scholar was in Washington it was hard to get much out of him, and once he got into uniform, however sedentary the assignment, it was almost impossible."

Science and Society in Ancient China

IN his Conway Memorial Lecture, "Science and Society in Ancient China", delivered on May 12, 1947, Dr. Joseph Needham attempts to sketch a pattern of the organisation of Chinese feudal society and its relation to Western European society (London: Watts and Co., Ltd. 2s. net). While the Taoist hermits who withdrew from human society to contemplate Nature had no scientific method, they tried to understand Nature in an intuitive and observational way, and the earliest chemistry and astronomy in Asia had Taoist connexions. In ancient China, although Taoist empirical mysticism favoured the development of science, Confucian ethical rationalism was antagonistic, and it could not be claimed that all through history rationalism had been the chief progressive force in society. While inventions and technological discoveries such as gunpowder, paper, printing, the magnetic compass and efficient animal harness, which changed the course of civilization, were made in China, modern science and technology did not develop them. Dr. Needham points out that the status of military technology may deeply affect the crystallization of social philosophy, and that a moral question such as slavery may be closely connected with technical factors. Philosophical and ethical thought, he believes, can never be dissociated from their material basis, and he thinks that Chinese civilization was basically inhibited from giving rise to modern science and technology, because the society which grew up in China after the feudal period was unsuitable for these developments. Dr. Needham concludes by commending a closer study of the great classics of Chinese philosophy and of the parallel course of technology in China.

Interchange of Technical Publications in Sheffield

A REPORT on the progress made during the last year by the Organisation for the Interchange of Technical Publications in Sheffield was presented to the fifteenth annual general meeting held in the Central Library, Sheffield, on December 2. This Organisation controls a system of co-operative borrowing of books, periodicals and other records, between the numerous special libraries in the Sheffield area. Recent activities of the Organisation have been directed to other ways of assisting research and development now that the effective pooling of technical publications and information has been operating for many years. The annual report shows that 1,459 publications were borrowed last year. A survey of the location of foreign patents in British libraries was undertaken; through the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, the Patents Office was asked to close the gap in indexes and abridgments to British patent specifications left during the War; and an inquiry made as to the amount of assistance obtainable from the Nederlandsch Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur in foreign patent searches. At the annual general meeting, it was decided to ask the Board of Trade to have the mass of documents relating to war-time

German industry held by the Technical Information and Documents Unit of the Board abstracted and indexed on similar lines to the work done in the United States by the Air Technical Intelligence and to have the more important items translated on the advice of technical experts. It was also recommended that files of the microfilms taken by the Board of machine drawings selected from this collection should be deposited with the leading technical libraries of Britain. Twenty-four firms and seven societies and institutions now belong to the Organisation.

Textile Laboratories at Leeds

THE International Wool Secretariat has for the past ten years given increasing support to the University of Leeds for research on wool; it has now made a gift of £10,000 for the purchase of equipment for the new Textile Laboratories, all the apparatus to be utilized for the benefit of the wool industry. At present, five men hold Secretariat fellowships in the Department, and in addition, a grant of £1,600 a year has been made during the past two years in support of research in textile engineering. The number of workers engaged on these and other wool research projects is now so great that a severe strain has been thrown on the laboratory accommodation. In 1946, however, the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers of London made a grant of £20,000 towards the building of new wool research laboratories, and a start on the work was made in December 1947. The ground floor of the new building will be used to extend the Cloth Finishing Section of the Department, while the first floor will contain several laboratories for wool research workers. The second floor will take the form of one large laboratory, which will be used to give undergraduates practical experience of the applications of chemistry at all stages of the manufacture of wool textile materials. The grant of £10,000 from the International Wool Secretariat is for the equipment of the new building and will be used to purchase the most modern types of machinery for the Finishing Section, as well as the special apparatus which will be needed by research workers and undergraduates.

Old Scientific and Natural History Books

THE following catalogues have been issued by Messrs. Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., of 11 Grafton Street, London, W.: No. 644, Books and Periodicals relating to Mathematics, Physics and Allied Sciences including two small collections on Accountancy and Mining; No. 650, Books and Periodicals on all Branches of Zoology, Geology, Palaeontology and Botany; and a Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts issued to commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the firm of Bernard Quaritch: 1847-1947. Noteworthy among these is Messrs. Quaritch's centenary catalogue. This is of especial interest to booklovers on account of the introductory matter, in which is related the growth of the firm from small beginnings in October 1847, in a shop in Castle Street, Leicester Square, London, to its present status as a business of world-wide repute. There is also a portrait of the founder, who died in 1899, and a brief sketch of his life, prepared by his daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Quaritch Wrentmore. As might have been anticipated, this catalogue is worthy of the occasion. It is a lavishly illustrated production, containing six coloured and some forty black-and-

white plates. Among more than two hundred books listed for sale there is a number of items of scientific interest, including the *editio princeps* of Pliny's "Historia naturalis", printed at Venice in 1469; a first edition of Newton's "Principia" (another copy is offered in Catalogue 644); an exceptionally fine copy of Hooke's "Micrographia"; and the first illustrated edition of the "Hortus Sanitatis", printed at Mainz in 1491. Many interesting works are listed in Catalogues 644 and 650, which contain 423 and 1,926 items, respectively.

Another catalogue of interest is that of Dr. E. Weil, c/o National Provincial Bank, 9 Market Place, London, N.W.11. This is No. 10, "From Alchemy to Chemistry and Pharmacology", and it includes also a section with sixty-nine works relating to the early history and development of photography. Among several works by or relating to Robert Boyle listed in this catalogue is Johann Seger von Weidenfeld's alchemical work "De Secretis Adeptorum" (London, 1684), in which the author made use of an unprinted manuscript by Boyle. Dr. Weil suggests that this manuscript, entitled "De Magisterio sive de investigatione secreti occulti Lullii", may be one of the Boyle manuscripts burned in 1688, of which, hitherto, no titles were known. This work, dedicated to Robert Boyle, will, it is stated, be described in Dr. J. F. Fulton's next addenda to his bibliography of Boyle.

Food Calories

THE Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has issued an interesting brochure entitled "Energy-Yielding Components of Food and Computation of Calorie Values" (from the Organisation, Washington, D.C.). This is the report of a Committee on Calorie Conversion Factors and Food Composition Tables, and contains much useful information. An appendix deals with organic acids as sources of available calories, and this includes a useful bibliography. The Committee considered the main causes of difference between estimates of energy-yielding components and of energy values, and concluded that the ideal procedure is separate determination of all the substances contained in food which contribute energy, combined with accurate assessment of their individual physiological values and their interrelationships. The question of the protein value of nitrogenous constituents is not completely resolved. Discussing carbohydrate values of foods, the Committee considers that at present the use of 'carbohydrate by difference' is justified, provided that its limitations are understood and appropriate procedures are used for deriving energy values. The value of the report cannot, however, be appreciated unless it is read.

Earthquakes during the Last Quarter of 1947

THE last quarter of 1947 opened with an earthquake on October 3 which was felt most strongly at Santarem, caused some alarm in the working-class districts of Lisbon, and damaged many buildings in Lisbon, Cascaes and Estoril. There were about ten other strong earthquakes in October in various parts of the world, including the one felt strongly at Coroni in southern Greece on October 6, and another felt strongly and causing some property damage 40 miles south-west of Fairbanks in Alaska on October 16. The latter had an aftershock on October 20. During this month, thirty-eight small earthquakes and earth tremors were felt in New Zealand, the greatest

being on October 13 from an epicentre at lat. 44.2° S., long. 169.0° E., felt over most of the South Island. November opened with an intense earthquake on November 1, 150 miles north-east of Lima in Peru. This caused considerable property damage and also was responsible for the deaths of at least fifty-three people. Strong aftershocks of the earthquake occurred on November 7 and 25. Of the fourteen other strong earthquakes during the month, that on November 23 in south-west Montana was felt in Montana and Idaho. In December, some thirteen strong shocks occurred, the European ones being felt on December 13 in the Pyrenees, on December 20 in the Tirol and on December 25 at Lago d'Iseo in Italy. Seismological reports have been received from Beograd (Yugoslavia), Durham, Kew, United States Coast and Geodetic Survey and Jesuit Seismological Association, Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Wellington (New Zealand) and Zurich and the Swiss observatories.

International Conference on Sleeping Sickness

AT a conference convened jointly by the French, Belgian and British Colonial authorities and recently held at Brazzaville, French Congo, to which the Governments of Portuguese territories in Africa, of Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa also sent delegates, arrangements were made for the uniform mapping of the whole of Africa south of the Sahara to show the incidence of trypanosomiasis in man and domestic animals and of the various species of tsetse fly which transmit it. It was also agreed to establish, at Brazzaville and Leopoldville, a joint bureau for the rapid exchange of information on methods of controlling the disease, and to set up in Europe a scientific committee on an international basis to supervise the organisation of research. These conclusions will now be forwarded to the Governments of all the African territories as recommendations for a concerted effort to control the disease and to work towards its gradual elimination.

Society of Chemical Industry: Annual General Meeting

THE Society of Chemical Industry will hold its annual general meeting in Edinburgh during July 12-17. This is the first annual general meeting since the War to be held outside London, and the first since 1927 to be held in Edinburgh. The president of the Society, Dr. L. H. Lampitt, chief chemist and a director of Messrs. J. Lyons and Co., Ltd., will deliver his address on July 13. On July 14 there will be a lecture by Sir John Anderson, who has been awarded the Messel Medal for 1948 of the Society. The Lister Memorial Lecture will be given on July 15. This Lecture was founded to commemorate the influence of the work of the late Lord Lister on the pharmaceutical industry in Edinburgh and was endowed in 1944 by two Edinburgh firms of drug and fine chemical manufactures, Messrs. J. F. Macfarlan and Co. and Messrs. T. and H. Smith, Ltd. The first lecturer, in 1944, was Sir Alexander Fleming. This year's Lecture will be devoted to biochemistry. A series of papers will be presented dealing with industrial chemical aspects of a number of the principal industries in the east of Scotland. They will describe some of the industrial research which has already been done in Scotland and will point to the possibilities for the future. In many cases the lectures will be followed by visits to the factories and installations of the various industries. Lectures will be given by Prof. S. Watson, principal of the East of Scotland