

Oken advanced the science of embryology and founded the biological journal *Isis* (1816-48), an organ of wide scope responsible for an "encyclopaedic diffusion of knowledge". By promoting the first German Congress of Naturalists and Physicians in 1822, he initiated the annual meetings of men of science which now have their counterparts all over the world. He originated the vertebral theory of the skull, later expounded by Goethe and finally exploded by Huxley in 1858. He never knew financial security, and his candour earned him political enemies who were responsible for his dismissal from Jena and Munich. Given a professorship in the newly founded University of Zurich in 1833, he produced his thirteen-volume "Allgemeine Naturgeschichte". Though frequently in the wrong, Oken was an original thinker and teacher who stimulated others to scientific endeavour. His real name was 'Ockenfuss'.

### Science and Religion

THE controversy between truth as revealed by 'religious insight' and the scientific attitude is clearly brought out in two recent articles in *The Fortnightly* (No. 1,015; July 1951). In a review of Prof. Barbara Wootton's book, "The Testament of Social Science", J. B. Coates declares that knowledge of a scientific kind is on an inferior level of being to the existential world of the creative spirit, the world of value and of communion between persons, and should be recognized as being instrumental to it. Coates implies that the tendency to make science supreme over religion and philosophy is usually an evidence of spiritual debasement as it is frequently marked by intellectual arrogance. In her reply to Mr. Coates, Prof. Barbara Wootton argues much more tolerantly that Mr. Coates has attacked a windmill of his own making and that both unique personal experience and facts collected by scientific probing are essential if man's behaviour and values are to be understood. On a subject of such importance it is hoped that these articles will lead to comments by others.

### East African Industrial Research Board

THE eighth annual report of the East African Industrial Research Board, covering the year ended December 31, 1950, indicates that no new major investigations have been initiated, the technical staff having been fully occupied on investigations already in hand. Much analytical work has also been undertaken and many mineral ores again assayed on behalf of the Geological Survey of Uganda. Kyanite is now being calcined locally to give the more valuable product, mullite, from which a substantial production of high-grade refractories is expected to develop. The production of fired clay building materials on a much larger scale in the Nairobi area is imminent. Further work has been done on the manufacture of Broseley tiles from Kiambu sub-soil and finely ground quarry debris, and a small pilot plant is producing decorated domestic pottery using brushwork on a raw glaze, although the only large pottery operating in Kenya has closed down its plant. Production of soda-phosphate fertilizer is now established commercially, but further work is being carried out to eliminate a tendency of the briquettes to collapse on warming when the reagents are fired in a brick kiln, with consequent difficulty in obtaining even firing conditions. Further research has been carried out on the so-called 'fermentation' of fresh pyrethrum flowers to ascertain whether a special treatment

could be applied to the freshly picked flower heads which would substantially increase their pyrethrin content. It appears, however, that unless the action is closely controlled, no marked increase in pyrethrin content can be expected, and such control could not easily be applied on a large scale.

### Commonwealth Index of Scientific Translations

FOLLOWING resolutions passed at the British Commonwealth Scientific Official Conference in 1946 and the Royal Society Scientific Information Conference in 1948, the British Commonwealth of Nations Scientific Liaison Offices in London have started a Commonwealth index of scientific translations. Each of the Commonwealth countries has or will have an agency which is to maintain a central index of translations into English of published scientific papers, reports and journal articles which have been made by various organizations within the Commonwealth. Each agency collects details of translations made by the organizations in its own country which are co-operating in the scheme; the information is then passed to British Commonwealth of Nations Scientific Liaison Offices, London, where index cards are prepared and sent out to the agencies within the Commonwealth. Persons wishing to know if a certain translation is available should apply to the agency in their own country. So far the following agencies have been established: *United Kingdom*, ASLIB, 4 Palace Gate, London, W.8; *Canada*, Information Division, National Research Council, Ottawa; *Australia*, Information Service, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne; *New Zealand*, Information Bureau, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Wellington; *India*, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research, Secretariat, New Delhi.

### Preservation of Glass from Corrosion

A SHORT note by Max Unwin on the preservation of glass from the effects of weathering is contained in the April issue of the *Museums Journal*. In many instances, iridescence in glass is caused by carbon dioxide in the air or soil forming carbonic acid. This combines with the alkaline constituents of glass and causes decomposition of the surface which may ultimately lead to complete disintegration. The iridescent appearance is the result of an optical effect, and the lamination of the decayed surface may be eliminated by impregnating the surface with a medium optically continuous with the glass itself. The resin now used for this purpose is a polyvinyl acetate dissolved in toluol, prepared by Messrs. Hopkin and Williams, Ltd. Impregnation is effected by dipping the object for a short time in the resin solution.

### Oil and Colour Chemists' Association

THE membership of the Oil and Colour Chemists' Association has increased so rapidly, and its *Journal*, published monthly, has so increased in size, that it has become necessary to establish a permanent office. Mr. R. H. Hamblin has been appointed general secretary, both to look after the general affairs of the Association and to deal with the editorial side of the *Journal*. All business inquiries and communications should therefore be addressed to him at the Association's new offices, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The 1951 Conference of the