

the moist climate. The groups of natives were always taken as they lived, according to climatic and psychological essentials, the women naked and often painted, the men unembarrassed by more than a loincloth.

THE AMERICAN STATE AND HOUSEHOLD SCIENCE.

THE application of science to national life and industry in the United States proceeds apace, and affords a very interesting spectacle in its variety of methods and experiments. Undoubtedly great progress is being made amidst a great deal of talk, and America bids fair to rectify itself in relation to science much more quickly than we can do even under the stupendous impact of war and all that it threatens to us. In this process of rectification the United States Government appears to be taking a discreet and effective part. A Bureau of Standards sounds more like Berlin than Washington, but the name is misleading if it suggests bureaucracy and punctilious standardisation. The circulars of the Bureau are, in fact, very careful and admirable scientific publications conveying a vast amount of extremely useful information, usually written in a human way and having behind them nothing in the shape of an act of legislature or compulsory standardisation. The Government gives a lead, it shows you something of which you may avail yourself; you may take it or leave it, but, at any rate, it is there. It is a calamity that we cannot say as much for our own country, where a Board of Trade hardly seems to understand what you mean when you ask it to embody a scientific element.

In one of its latest circulars¹ the U.S. Bureau of Standards enters upon a new path, attempting to reach the household:—“(1) To give information as to wants, methods, and instruments of measurement useful in household activities; (2) to describe available means of assuring correct quantity in articles bought by weight and measure; and (3) to give other facts of interest which would awaken an appreciation of the rôle of measurement in daily life.”

Stress is laid on the educational value of such measurements and on the increase of efficiency in the household, which comes from the habit of thinking in terms of units and definite quantities. The introduction is indeed a temperate and admirable appeal for increased accuracy and better knowledge in the use of household appliances and in the conduct of household operations.

The substance of the circular is comprehensive. It includes chapters on commodities, heat, light, electricity, gas, water, atmospheric humidity, atmospheric pressure, density of liquids, time. In each case the trade and household measuring instruments related to these topics are carefully described both in principle and in mechanical detail, and excellent illustrations abound. There is an abundance also of useful hints directed towards securing efficiency and

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce. Circular of the Bureau of Standards No. 55. “Measurements for the Household.”

economy, and, in fact, the circular might be called in many respects a treatise on that ambiguous subject known as domestic science.

As such it suffers from a common defect, namely, the attempt to expound scientific principles piecemeal and incidentally, or parenthetically, to single applications. This kind of defect is always visited with severity by the more academic critics, but it may be urged that the defect is not so great as it seems. It is true enough that the contents of this circular, so far as they call for scientific comprehension, will be unassimilable by the ordinary mistress of the household who has only received the one-sided and largely unnegotiable gift of “a good general education.” But it is equally true that the anchorage of sound scientific explanations to things and processes of the most obvious practical utility is as likely as anything to direct attention to what has been neglected in one generation and may be secured to another.

Something must be done to demonstrate the place of science in practical affairs, and this seems a legitimate way. Our educational masters seem to make most of their mistakes by forgetting that they are exceptional members of society in having an enthusiasm for abstract knowledge. No doubt the love of knowledge for itself exists to some degree in everyone, and may be developed; but the ordinary circumstances of the world make most people, even at an early age, want to know what use is to be made of knowledge. The fastidious exclusion of the useful from the exposition of the good and true is an unnecessary and fatal extravagance of the pedagogue, and nowhere has its incidence been more lamentable than in the case of natural science. Are we not at the moment bemoaning a nation that does not even know that science is useful? Who or what is responsible for this? Many answers are given, but none is nearer the truth than this: that our teaching has failed. How and where it has failed might be well illustrated by this circular, if those who are engaged in teaching science to the future housewives of England could be examined upon the contents. We should see the reason why such a gap remains between the science of our schools and science in actual use. There is a missing link. It is true of the domestic world, it is true of the industrial world, it is true of the whole national life, and there is urgent need of a remedy. The publication under notice helps to fill one gap, and it should be of real value to those engaged in teaching science to future housewives; and it will help also towards making boys' science more mobile in their homes.

A. S.

THE CLOSING OF MUSEUMS.

A PROTEST against the closing of museums (including art galleries) was made to the Prime Minister on February 10 by a deputation representing the Museums Association, the National Art Collections Fund, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Hellenic Society, the Art Workers'