

If it be admitted that the Hudson Bay Company traded cowries, it must have been due to having seen such already in use by the Indians, for without this appreciation of the special mystical value of the cowrie there would have been no demand for them. On the west coast of Africa the cult of the cowrie was certainly not first introduced there by the white traders of the fifteenth century; they found the blacks already in possession of these white shells, the custom of using them and the superstitious reverence attached to such shells having filtered through Central Africa ages prior to the advent of the whites. It is only natural that full advantage should have been taken by traders, and thus an enormous trade in these shells sprang up. So far as I am aware there is no evidence that the Hudson Bay Company traded in the money-cowrie.

Mr. Wardle's arguments do not explain the remarkable identity in the association of the money-cowrie with medicine ceremonies in places so far apart as Africa and America. In both these continents the cowrie is regarded as the "symbol of life"—a distinction which no other shell enjoys.

In a magazine article he has previously expounded the procedure of Columbus in introducing the cowrie, *C. moneta*, into the New World. But in his account, the gist of which appears in his foregoing letter, he omits the most wonderful episode of his "wonder-tale," as he himself calls it—I refer to the fact that after all the imaginary wanderings and episodes on sea and land, the cowries should eventually have come to rest in the heart of the American continent, and, "of course purely by accident," have become linked up with the identical beliefs and fantastic practices with which they are associated in Africa, India, and eastern Asia.

To such lengths does the American ethnologist go rather than admit the patent fact that these shells, along with the associated beliefs and practices, were taken from eastern Asia to America long before the time of Columbus.

J. WILFRID JACKSON.

Manchester Museum.

Field Glasses for Army Use.

SOON after the outbreak of the war, my father, Lord Roberts, asked the public to lend their glasses for the use of the Army. After two years I think your readers may be glad to have some particulars of the result of his request.

Upwards of 26,000 glasses have been received, without reckoning those which, in pursuance of my father's suggestion, have been collected in Australia, the Malay States, and elsewhere, and issued forthwith to the local forces on their way to the seat of war. The instruments sent comprise every type, and have been classified and issued according to the needs of different units. Particularly useful have been the fine prismatic glasses sent, which have been allocated to artillery and machine-gun units, according to their power; large mounted telescopes for batteries, deer-stalking telescopes for gunners and snipers, and good old-fashioned non-prismatic racing glasses for detection of the nationality of aircraft, locating snipers, signalling by disc, collecting wounded, and musketry instruction.

I am indeed grateful for the way in which my father's appeal has been met. British people all over the world have given their best, recognising that, in spite of the fact that their glasses are on loan and that the organisation for their return has been arranged, the chances of loss are many, and that they may never get them back.

When I think of the enormous numbers of good glasses sent, it may seem ungracious to ask for more, but the demand is still great. I am told that at watering-

places and on racecourses and elsewhere large numbers of glasses are still to be seen in private hands, and to the owners of these I would once more appeal. I should add that we have been entrusted by the Ministry of Munitions with the purchase of individual glasses from those who cannot afford to lend them, and that the address for sending glasses for either purpose is the same. Every good glass (except opera-glasses) and every telescope (except toys) is wanted for the service of the country.

December 18.

ROBERTS.

Address for sending:—The Manager of Lady Roberts's Field Glass Fund, National Service League, 72 Victoria Street, S.W.

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA.

THE second report of the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council of Science and Industry for the Commonwealth of Australia shows that energetic steps are being taken to provide and set in motion the necessary machinery for the promotion of industrial research in the Commonwealth. Strong committees have been formed in all the States with the exception of Tasmania, and it is hoped that this State will soon take action and complete the scheme recommended by the Advisory Council.

The Executive Committee has commenced its work in a methodical manner by making inquiries with the view of compiling information regarding Australian industries, problems arising in connection with them, the laboratories and personnel now available for research, and the facilities for the education of future investigators.

We look forward with considerable interest to further reports to learn what conclusions are arrived at as to the education of the research workers of the future. The leaders in this research movement in Australia are, of course, familiar with all our educational systems in the Old Country, and, indeed, many of them are graduates of British universities. With the special problem before them of training research workers, it will be interesting to see to what extent they will go along the old lines, or whether they will recommend new methods, having fewer Education Acts and educational interests to take into account.

The Executive Committee, since its first report a few weeks previously, has been able not only to complete the machinery of the scheme, but also to consider many suggested researches. The broad character of these shows that the committee intends that its functions should include all types of industries that can be benefited by research. Problems relating to engineering, chemistry, gold-mining, diseases of cattle, agriculture, bread-making, and other matters appear in the list.

We notice that a special committee has been appointed to deal with the standardisation of physical apparatus for the teaching of science in the technical and other schools and colleges of Australia. The object is to enable the apparatus to be made in Australia, as it is inconvenient to depend on supplies imported from a great distance.