

Scientific Publications for Russia.

IT will be remembered that when Mr. H. G. Wells visited Petrograd in November last he found that the remnant of Russian literary and scientific workers who had survived the revolution had been brought together by the Soviet Government and housed in two institutions in Petrograd. There the scientific workers were carrying on their researches as best they could in the face of great privations owing to lack of food and clothing. What they felt even more keenly was that they were cut off from men of science outside Russia and were unable to obtain scientific literature or apparatus.

A committee was therefore formed in December under the title "The British Committee for Aiding Men of Letters and Science in Russia" to obtain some of the chief publications required. An appeal, which was published in *NATURE* of January 6, p. 598, was made for funds to help the project forward.

Prof. Oldenburg, permanent secretary of the Petrograd Academy of Sciences, was communicated with, and was able to provide the committee with a list of the works which were urgently required. This list contained a number of works issued by British and other publishers, together with the publications of many learned societies. The committee then communicated with the leading scientific societies which had sent their publications into Russia before the revolution, and several entrusted their publications to the com-

mittee for transmission to the House of Science in Petrograd. A number of British publishers presented volumes for the same purpose, and help was also given by universities and publishers in the United States. In addition the committee has acquired books by purchase and by gift from private individuals.

Naturally very careful inquiries were made from both the British and the Soviet authorities as to the prospect of the books reaching the men for whom they were intended. Every assurance was given that delivery would not be interfered with, and several cases of books were accordingly dispatched. It was feared that in spite of their assurances the Soviet authorities would confiscate the literature, and it is therefore gratifying to learn that an acknowledgment of their safe arrival has been received from Prof. Oldenburg. A book-list which was also dispatched has been returned signed by several notable Russian men of science, so there is now little doubt that the books were received by those for whom they were intended.

It is thought that fear of miscarriage of these books has prevented the co-operation of many well-wishers of the scheme. Now that this fear is allayed it is hoped that further subscriptions and donations will be forwarded to the treasurer of the committee, Dr. C. Hagberg Wright, the London Library, St. James's Square, S.W.1.

Friendship.

(To T. H. R.)

WERE life an empty bubble blown by chance
To glitter, mount, and burst beyond repair;
Were mind delusion, fancies rich and rare
Mere exhalations, firefly effluence;

Or should this mood be but the spirit's trance,
And one enduring Whole his Being share
By ordered gradients up the thronal stair
From atom fires to soulful radiance;

Be all philosophy beyond our ken
And nothing certain,—yet, as star draws star,
As bubbles meet and cling, electrons blend,
There sings a joy when friend meets parted
friend,

Time's limitations yield, and past the bar
Life's transcendental portals ope again.

WALTER GARSTANG.

June 19, 1921.

Conference of American and British Engineers.

THE four leading engineering societies of the United States of America recently combined to form the United Engineering Society, to promote the more general interests of the profession. Fifteen delegates from these societies have come to London, partly to bring a greeting and message of friendship to British societies, and partly to present the John Fritz medal, the greatest honour the American societies can confer, to Sir Robert A. Hadfield, Bart.

The chairman of the delegation is Mr. Ambrose Swasey, who is not only a constructor of the finest machine-tools, but also the builder of the

great telescopes at Mount Hamilton, at the Naval Observatory, Washington, and at the Yerkes Observatory, Wisconsin. He also built the 72-in. reflecting telescope of the Dominion Astronomical Society at Victoria (B.C.). Among the delegates are Col. A. S. Dwight (American Institute of Mining and Metallurgy), Mr. C. F. Rand (secretary of the board which awarded the medal), Dr. Ira N. Hollis (American Society of Mechanical Engineers and president of the Worcester (Mass.) Polytechnic Institute), Mr. C. T. Main (American Society of Mechanical Engineers), Dr. F. B. Jewett (American Society of Electrical