

irrigation system of enormous extent, together with the remnants of a large dam. There is also a copper tool, which is said to be an authentic mining implement. These finds are ascribed to a vanished race, and on account of the diminutive size of the stairways, it is suggested that its members were pygmies. The collections have been placed at the disposal of the Ethnological Department of the University of the Witwatersrand and are said to be regarded by the Department as very important. As Mr. van der Merwe is a layman in ethnological matters, the verdict of experts in the cultures of the natives of South Africa will be awaited with interest. As a rule, unfortunately, previous claims to the discovery of new cultures and vanished races have not survived their impartial scrutiny.

A New South African Culture ?

A CLAIM to have distinguished a new material culture in South Africa is put forward by Dr. Ir. E. C. N. Van Hoepen, director of the National Museum, Bloemfontein (*Argæologiese Navorsing*, Dl. i St. 5), in describing a remarkable stone pipe from a shelter near Bethlehem. Its peculiarity lies in the ornamentation, a system of curved grooves and on one side a sinuous ridge ending in a reversed E, representing a snake. Similar pipes have previously been described, one of clay from the ash-heaps of stone huts at Vegkop by Van Riet Lowe and another of stone by Stow. Van Riet Lowe attributed the pipe he described to the Leghoya, dating the huts at about 1790, but Dr. Van Hoepen does not consider his reasoning or evidence satisfactory, and points out that stone huts are not a characteristic of Bantu culture, the Leghoya themselves using conical grass thatched huts, according to Stow. He himself sees in the pipes and the shelters closer affinities with Hottentot, Bushmen, and Xosa, but concludes that the three characters, the stone pipes, the stone huts and the ornamentation do not belong to any known African culture. We are, therefore, he holds, dealing with something new, a culture for which the name 'stone-hut' culture is proposed. This view, important as it is for the history of South African cultures, should be accepted with some caution. Its confirmation by further evidence will be awaited with interest.

American Archæologists in Yugoslavia

AT a meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in Atlantic City at the end of December, Dr. Vladimir J. Fewkes described the work during the past summer of a joint archæological expedition of the Peabody Museum, the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, and the American School of Prehistoric Research in Yugoslavia. Some 150 archæological sites were visited and examined. A large proportion of these were found to belong to Greek, Roman, Macedonian or Byzantine cultures. The most considerable undertaking of the expedition was the excavation of the neolithic site at Starevo, of which the investigation had been begun in the previous year. The settlement is dated at about 2500 B.C. and is found to consist of a number of irregularly placed groups of semi-subterranean dwell-

ings, of which the foundations have been exposed. Among the material found are crude but well-made cooking pots, painted pottery, needles, awls and spatulas of bone, stone knives and celts, shells, and small libation tables of baked clay. The settlement was one of small farmers with domesticated animals, who supplemented their food supply by hunting and fishing. In a report of the communication from Science Service, Washington, D.C., Dr. Fewkes is said to have stated that the expedition had gathered fresh evidence relating to the early trade routes of this part of Europe, an area he regards as the archæological key-region of the Balkans.

Spectrum Analysis

THE increasingly great interest now being shown in spectrum analysis is well exemplified by two recent developments in the United States. The first of these was the setting up by the American Society for Testing Materials of a committee (E-2) on spectrographic analysis in its application to analytical and metallurgical problems. This committee is now at work and it is probable that tangible results will be forthcoming in the near future. News of the second development has just reached Great Britain. It has been decided that one of the lines of work to be intensively pursued at the magnificently equipped spectroscopic laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is the application of spectrum analysis to industrial and related problems. In order that as close touch as is possible may be made with industrial problems, a research conference is to be held at the Institute during the week beginning July 17, and it is hoped that at this conference industrial experts, academic research workers and manufacturers of spectroscopic equipment will meet and discuss those aspects of the problem with which they are individually familiar. It is clear that one of the earliest developed aspects of spectroscopy is again coming very much to the fore, and that the dreams of some of the early spectroscopists regarding the general use of this technique in industry are coming measurably nearer realisation.

Machine Age's Starvation Predicted

THE comparatively rapid depletion of the earth's available resources in this mechanical age was considered by Prof. R. A. Gortner, of the University of Minnesota, in a paper before the American Association for the Advancement of Science in December (Science Service, Washington, D.C.). It is pointed out that irreplaceable stores of natural resources absolutely essential to modern industrial civilisation are disappearing into the 'maws of industry' and so are wastefully dissipated over the earth. While the publicity of technocracy directs attention to the part played by mechanical energy in remaking economic conditions, the shelves in some of Nature's cupboard are showing signs of exhaustion of the materials necessary for a mechanical age. In particular, Prof. Gortner mentions the approaching exhaustion of copper, antimony, tin, lead, zinc, chromium, manganese, nickel and iron, which are stored in parts