

of charge by schools, technical colleges, scientific societies and other educational organizations. Both 35 mm. and 16 mm. sound and silent films are available. Synopses of these films giving an indication of the main themes dealt with are to be found in a catalogue recently issued by the Bureau. The films fall into three main sections, dealing with the varied aspects of oil production and drilling, some of the uses to which oil is put, and its particular adaptation to the requirements of the modern petrol engine, respectively. In the production and drilling section, there is one more or less general film giving an indication of how oilfields are discovered and wells drilled, which countries produce oil and how it is transported in tankers across the seas. This is followed by others having a more local bias. The work of James Young on the production of oil from shale and the subsequent establishment of the Scottish shale industry is only one of several themes which lend themselves admirably to pictorial development. Illustrations of the uses of oil are as diversified as they are manifold. They embrace fishing for swordfish, re-fuelling an Imperial Airways liner at Kisumu and spraying trees to destroy insects, to cite only a few examples. The films depicting first principles of internal combustion and compression ignition engines and the theory and practice of their lubrication are of necessity less spectacular in their conception. Nevertheless the diagrams and models will prove of great assistance to those seeking lucid explanations of technical details.

### Antiquity

IN the December issue of *Antiquity*, the editor discusses in the frankest terms the future and the policy of that publication in relation to present conditions in international relations and world affairs. After the most careful survey of all possibilities and probabilities, it has been decided "to take courage, and at any rate plan for the year 1940". In arriving at this decision notwithstanding the difficulties which arise both from the almost complete cessation of all archaeological activities on the outbreak of war, and from the absence on active service of many of its contributors and subscribers, the editor's decision has been determined largely by the view that the periodical for which he has been responsible both in and since its inception represents an essential contribution to learning and progress to which, so far as is humanly possible, there should be no interruption. In this opinion he is fortified by expressions of opinion from his supporters, of whom one writes that it is "of paramount importance that all *foci* of Culture and Learning should be kept alive" during the present troubles. While endorsing in the strongest terms this formula of one, at least, of the functions of publications of the class to which *Antiquity* belongs, we would also second the more readily the editor's appeal for continuance of that support from the public which has helped him to win for this publication the position which it holds in cultural studies to-day.

### An Early Gas Mask

ATTENTION is directed in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (Nov. 3, p. 1239) to a description of a mask which appeared in vol. 43 of the Society's *Transactions* (1825). It was designed by John Roberts, of St. Helens, Lancashire, "to enable persons to breathe in thick smoke or in air loaded with suffocating vapours", and was effective against smoke and also against a gas such as sulphurous acid. It consisted of a leather hood with two apertures filled with glass or mica to see through. The hood descended to the bottom of the neck, was well wadded at the bottom, so as to be rendered airtight, or nearly so, when secured by the straps attached. From the nose a flexible leather pipe is attached, terminating at the bottom in a trumpet-shaped piece of japanned tinfoil, the open end of which is plugged with a moist sponge kept in place by a piece of coarse cloth. Breathing is carried on through the tube, and any particles in the air or vapours or gases in any considerable degree absorbable by water are removed by the cloth filter and the moist sponge. An illustration shows a very workman-like piece of apparatus. Details are given of various tests that were made with it.

### Alcoholism and Suicide

DR. MERRILL MOORE (*New England J. Med.*, 221, 691; 1939) discusses the relation between alcohol and suicide in a paper based on the study of 143 alcoholic patients, admitted to the Boston City Hospital during the period 1915-38, who had attempted suicide, out of a total of 1,195 admitted during the same period after attempting suicide; 98 were men and 45 women. The great majority were between the ages of thirty and forty. Conditions of occupational, marital or economic maladjustment were present in all. By far the greatest number were unemployed or of unknown employment, and few skilled workers were included. As regards motivation the reasons offered for the attempted suicide were occupational maladjustment, domestic friction, depression and anxiety. Poison by mouth, especially iodine, the ineffectiveness of which was probably not realized, was the most popular method of suicidal attempt. Inhalation of illuminating gas came next, while less frequent methods were slashing, jumping from high places, hanging, immersion and firearms. 136 (95 per cent) were unsuccessful in their attempt and only 7 (5 per cent) died after admission to hospital, as compared with 11 per cent of the total number of suicidal patients admitted. Dr. Moore attributes the large number of failures in suicidal attempts among the alcoholic patients partly to the ingestion of non-poisonous substances or sub-lethal doses, and partly to the tendency of the alcohol to render the method of suicidal attempt less efficient.

### Social and Technical Aspects of Housing

THE methods employed in Belgium, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for improving urban and