

an expression of æsthetic principles, as, for example, in the better-known specimens of West African sculpture, seemed to attach a false value to characters which were, in historical perspective, faults of technique rather than an outcome, conscious or unconscious, of any theory of artistic balance, selection or composition. A saner method of approach to the products of primitive art was illustrated by Dr. Leonard Adam in a recent lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Arts (*J. Roy. Soc. Arts*, June 28, 1940) in which he briefly directed attention to certain of the main principles of primitive art which emerge from its study in accordance with the evolutionary or cultural methods elaborated by the late Dr. A. C. Haddon, Prof. Franz Boas and others. Incidentally Dr. Adam stressed the interest and importance of the art of the American Indians of the north-west coast of America, which has suffered neglect in favour of the culturally less illuminating art of Africa.

The future of primitive art is, when properly understood, no less interesting than its past. It is true that in many parts of the world European impact has brought about degeneration; but experience in West Africa has shown that this is not inevitable. It was pointed out by Dr. Adam that modern ethnographical studies have demonstrated that early observers tended to overstress the static element in primitive culture. Art, however, like other cultural factors, has been subjected to a continuous process of change. Much of the so-called primitive art is in fact both highly sophisticated and 'evolved'. The result of such European guidance in West African education as has been formulated with understanding of native modes of thought has been to produce a native school of art, which not only in the traditional art of wood-carving, but also in other branches of artistic activity such as painting, is thoroughly African in conception, feeling, and atmosphere. It has survived or overcome the break with the social and religious factors upon which African art depended, but which vanished, or are vanishing, before European contacts. Hence, as Dr. Hanns Vischer pointed out from the chair on this occasion, this development indicates a line of advance in the present deplorable state of education in Africa—a beginning "to make grow . . . to liberate something which has been stifled under the thick crust of foreign knowledge acquired without real understanding".

Rufford Village Museum

RUFFORD Village Museum, which was opened at Rufford Old Hall, a National Trust property in West Lancashire in July of last year as: "A Museum of Folk Culture and Industry: To illustrate and capture the spirit of the countryside" (to quote its constitution) is being developed by the honorary curator, Mr. Philip Asheroft, jun., to be "an example for other districts to follow, so that in the future, each village or group of villages will have a museum to represent their life, history and culture". In addition to Baron Hesketh's extensive collection of old armoury and other relics of medieval life, Mr. Eric Hardy has

drawn up lists of the local fauna and flora which will be exhibited above photographs, drawings, diagrams, etc., of wild life to encourage people to preserve as well as observe the wild life of the parish. This happens to be unusually rich, for the flora includes flowering rush, flowering fern, arrowhead, yellow waterlily, water soldier, bladderwort and nearly a thousand other plants; there is a list of twenty-two mammals for the parish and F. A. H. Hall and E. Hardy have drawn up a list of 101 bird records, including sixty nesting species—a third of the British records. The Museum itself is a historic old timbered hall, the restored part of which dates from the seventeenth century.

Research in Social Relations in Industry

MR. H. VALDER, of Hamilton, New Zealand, has endowed for five years a research fellowship in social relations in industry at Victoria University College, Wellington, N.Z. Mr. Valder has himself done original work in investigating problems of industry, more especially those concerning the relation of capital and labour, and he believes that the work can be carried further by a man with scientific knowledge. To ensure that the investigator may be independent, the work is to be done under the ægis of the Victoria University College Council, and the appointment will carry with it the privileges of a professorial chair in the College. The salary offered is £1,000 a year (N.Z. currency) for five years. Applications from candidates should be sent to the Registrar of the College.

Forestry Investigations in India

THE activities of the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun, India, are summarized in a report entitled "Forest Research in India and Burma, Part 1, 1938-39". The work of the various branches of the Institute is described and the report forms a record of a large amount of useful work carried out in the interests of the State. Apart from research work, an enormous number of queries relating to the utilization of various forest products has kept the staff extremely busy during the year. It is noteworthy that all the provinces of India now employ an officer solely dealing with sylvicultural problems. The co-ordination of this work and advising on statistical requirements, in order to make the best use of the researches going on, have taxed the Sylvicultural Branch of the Institute severely.

It is not possible to make more than passing reference to a few of the programmes of work that are being carried out. The destruction of timbers by termites and by fungi is one of great importance, and this work is closely linked with problems of the seasoning and preservation of woods of many kinds. The paper-pulp section is another activity of great importance and promise, and questions connected with the manufacture of paper and plywood were probably the most numerous of all. The report itself, it may be added, is printed on paper made at the Institute from *Saccharum arundinaceum*. The cultivation of drugs is another aspect of work that

presents many problems of interest. The exploration of the potentialities of Derris as an insecticide is very encouraging, while proof that the alkaloid ephedrine, present in Indian species of *Ephedra*, is in no way inferior to the Chinese product as a potent remedy for asthma, opens up possibilities for India in this connexion. It is hoped that failure in the past to attend to certain essentials regarding the collection of the plants will be remedied and full advantage taken of the present opportunity for developing trade in Indian *Ephedra*. Among other subjects spike disease of sandalwood is still under investigation, but proof is needed that *Jassidæ* (leaf-hoppers) are the vectors concerned with the transmission of this baffling kind of disease.

Scottish Society for Research in Plant Breeding

THE report for 1940 of the director of the Plant Breeding Station at Craig's House, Edinburgh, includes several important practical results of scientific research. It is shown that the renovation of semi-derelict pastures is best performed by ploughing up and re-sowing. A nurse crop of Sandy oats to be grazed in July, and a mixture of varieties of one grass species, together with wild white clover, are found to be preferable to sowing a mixture of grass species under rape or a seeding nurse crop of oats.

The Ainville sub-station, used for trials, has been transferred to six acres of land, six hundred feet above sea-level, at Boghall. The breeding of potatoes resistant to blight and to virus disease is meeting with considerable success, and several selections are being further tested. It is now possible to investigate the genetical background of resistance to pure strains of the *B*, *C* and *X* viruses. The available evidence indicates an autotetraploid segregation with dominance for susceptibility. Resistance to finger and toe disease in swedes is being tested both among new seedlings and in the field. Beans, wheat, barley and kale are among the other crops which are being bred for practical purposes under the guidance of scientific principles.

Institute of Organic Chemistry in Moscow

IT is announced by "Russia Today" Press Service that work has been commenced in Moscow on the new building for the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. The building will consist of three blocks, the main one of which (the laboratory block) will house the seven departments engaged in the study of the different branches of organic chemistry. This block will have a volume of 1,907,000 cubic feet. In addition, there will be an autoclave building and a block for big installations and workshops, with an aggregate volume of 388,500 cubic feet. Spacious accommodation has been set aside for a library of 70,000 volumes, as well as a big reading-room and an auditorium for 250 persons. The cost of the new building, not counting special equipment, is estimated to be 12½ million roubles. It is hoped to complete it in 1942.

Military Training for University Students

SINCE it is recognized that young men of eighteen and onwards at universities cannot undertake home defence duties without undue interference with their studies, it has been decided to expand the contingents of Training Corps at universities so that every student may enrol to obtain basic military training. Those who wish to serve in the Royal Air Force will have an opportunity of joining a university air squadron. By these means university education will be maintained, and undergraduates will be enabled to acquire useful experience.

Postponement of Nobel Awards

ON October 11 the Board of the Nobel Foundation asked the Swedish Government to allow a postponement in conferring the Nobel Prizes of 1940 for literature, physics, and chemistry until the 1941 prizes are conferred. The Medicine Prize was yesterday reserved until 1941 by the Faculty of the Carolean Medico-Surgical Institute in Stockholm.

Announcements

THE seventeenth award of the Duddell Medal of the Physical Society to Prof. E. O. Lawrence, of the University of California, which was announced in *NATURE* of June 1, p. 852, has a significance deeper than the honouring of a great American physicist's achievements in the invention and development of the cyclotron. Circumstances permitting, Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to Washington, will present the Medal to Prof. Lawrence at Philadelphia on the evening of December 27, 1940, the occasion being that of a dinner in connexion with a three-day meeting of the American Physical Society. It is a particularly appropriate occasion, for on the same day there is to be also a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at which Prof. Lawrence, as a retiring vice-president, will address one of the sections.

THE following appointments in the Colonial Service have recently been made: P. Adames, agricultural officer, Sierra Leone; E. S. Capstick, agricultural officer, Sierra Leone; J. H. Hinds, Agricultural officer, Gold Coast; J. A. N. Burra, assistant conservator of forests, Gold Coast; J. P. W. Logie, assistant conservator of forests, Kenya.

MORE than 100,000 books were destroyed or severely damaged in a fire following the bombing of the University College library during a recent air raid on London. Two members of the staff were killed and eight were wounded, and the memorial hall was almost demolished.

Chronica Botanica, the international plant science journal, established in Holland in 1935, is being published fortnightly in the United States (annual subscription, about the same as formerly when the journal was published as a bi-monthly, 7.50 dollars, foreign and domestic, post paid). Communications should be sent to Dr. F. Verdoorn, P.O. Box 151, Waltham, Massachusetts.