

as this construction may be from the point of view of dry rot. The new edition of this Bulletin may be strongly recommended to those responsible for present building programmes, so that features likely to encourage dry rot may be avoided.

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AMONG the scientific papers mentioned in the report of the South Australian Museum for the period July 1, 1944, to June 30, 1945 (Adelaide, 1945) is one by H. Womersley, "Acarina of Australia and New Guinea. Family *Leeuwenhoekidae*" (*Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, 69, (1), 96). Mr. Womersley has published several other papers on the Acarina in the *Records of the South Australian Museum*, notably, in collaboration with Dr. W. G. Heaslip, on the Trombiculinae or itch mites, certain species of which have been responsible for scrub-typhus and scrub-itch among troops operating in New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. The taxonomic research on these has been centred in the South Australian Museum. Numerous specimens of Trombiculinae were collected by Dr. Heaslip in North Queensland, and by Dr. C. M. Gunther in New Guinea during their researches upon typhus fevers during the war period. It is reported that the Board has had under consideration the possibility of post-war extension of the Museum. The present congestion of both exhibition and storage space is acute, and it is now felt that the condition endangers the proper conservation of the collections, many of which are of a unique character and of inestimable value. The report also refers to needs in respect of the Museum's educational work, especially that connected with visiting school-classes. Hitherto the greater part of this service has fallen upon members of the scientific and technical staffs; but it is now felt that the position results in the inadequate employment of specialized qualifications. The situation could be relieved if the Education Department were to appoint two special teachers to act in co-operation with the Museum staff and to take charge of the school classes. It is pointed out that a similar arrangement is in operation in other Australian museums and that it has proved highly successful.

41- Introduction to Archaeological Method

No. 1 of the Handbook Series produced by the South African Archaeological Society is entitled "Method in Prehistory" and is by A. J. H. Goodwin (Cape Town, 12s. 6d.); it is an extremely useful little book. Prehistoric archaeology, whether in Europe or in South Africa, is a fascinating hobby subject, and as such is being increasingly taken up. But there are branches of the subject which are somewhat technical, as, for example, the processes which were used in the manufacture of the tools found, and their classification when collected in the field; also irreparable damage can be done to archaeological sites if amateur investigators without knowledge and experience start to excavate unaided. Some kinds of site are so common that little harm is actually done; but there are other rarer types, for example, cave sites or barrows, where the inexperienced amateur may do irreparable damage. Goodwin's book provides just that approach to prehistoric study which many people need. There are chapters on the scope of prehistory, on materials and technology, on field research and excavation, on the preservation and packing of material, on

nomenclature, and on the outfit required by an investigator. There is also a useful if short bibliography.

Literature on Soil Insecticides

THE Imperial Institute of Entomology has done good service in issuing "A Review of the Literature on Soil Insecticides" (Imperial Institute of Entomology, 41, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7. 10s.). Since the subject is one of wide interest and economic importance, it is a great advantage to have so much scattered information brought together under one cover. The work took its origin at a Conference on Insecticides and Fungicides of the Agricultural Research Council, which decided to ask Dr. H. C. Gough to prepare the review now before us. The period covered by this work begins in 1914 and ends, except for a few references, in 1940; owing to war conditions, its publication at an earlier date was impracticable. In order to ensure as wide a circulation as possible, the Agricultural Research Council delegated the publication of the review to the Imperial Institute of Entomology. The subject-matter of the review is extremely well arranged under the chemicals employed. The most important of these are grouped together and arranged alphabetically. The remaining substances, also arranged alphabetically, follow; but they proved difficult to classify owing to their being often referred to by different authors under different names. Many foreign names also proved difficult to translate owing to their often having different significance in different languages. A perusal of the 150 or more pages of this work shows how contradictory so many of the results obtained by different authors have been for almost all the substances tested. It is, therefore, impossible to draw any but very limited conclusions. This in itself is a cogent argument for renewed and carefully controlled experiments. Also the need for a full analysis of the diverse factors likely to influence the results of experiments has to be constantly borne in mind. A very fair indication of the extent of the subject of soil insecticides is given by the bibliography at the end of this review, in which more than 650 works are listed.

Synthetic Philosophy of the Seventeenth Century

In his Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1945, "Synthetic Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century: a Study of Early Science" (Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 2s. net), Canon C. D. Raven maintains that popular writers on the history of science are giving us a defective account of the breakdown of the medieval and the development of the modern world, and a caricature of the characters and intentions of the founders of the Royal Society; their metaphysical and religious interests are minimized and the progress which they made towards a synthetic philosophy ignored. Secondly, he points out that almost all the recent histories of science neglect the biological sciences, and especially botany and zoology, treating the subject as if mathematics were the sole primary theme, with astronomy and physics as its derivatives. Canon Raven contends that the remarkable group of men who gathered as the 'Invisible College' meeting at Cambridge, inspired by Robert Boyle and John Wilkins, and expanded in 1662 into the Royal Society, not only brought Britain into the front rank intellectually and almost succeeded in creating an alternative for the medieval synthesis, but were also men of sincere and deep religious conviction, and