

Darwin's "Journal"

IN his "Autobiography", Darwin referred to a "little diary, which I have always kept", in which he recorded the work on which he was engaged, the time which he took in completing each of his researches, the books in which they were described, and his movements from place to place. The document itself was headed "Journal". Francis Darwin also referred to his father's "Diary or Pocket-Book" as having been of great help to him in writing and compiling "Life and Letters". He added that "it was unfortunately written with great brevity, the history of a year being compressed into a page or less, and contains little more than the dates of the principal events of his life, together with entries as to his work, and as to the duration of his more serious illnesses". Some important quotations have been published from the "Journal", such as the famous entry under the date 1837: "In July opened first notebook on 'transmutation of species'. Had been greatly struck from about month of previous March on character of South American fossils, and species on Galapagos Archipelago. These facts origin (especially latter) of all my views". Edited by Sir Gavin de Beer, the "Journal" has now been published as a Bulletin in the Historical Series of the British Museum (Natural History) (2; No. 1). Students of evolution will be grateful to Sir Charles Darwin and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library for granting permission for this rich chronological story to be published.

Preserving the Amenities of Great Britain

AN interesting example of the zealous way the Council for the Preservation of Rural England safeguards the amenities of Britain is revealed in its report for 1958-59. Its Central Panel Committee has recently considered the implications arising from the fact that the output of pressed Oxford clay bricks is now approaching 50 per cent of the entire production of all bricks in England, Wales and Scotland. Enormous quantities of these bricks are in general use within an area at least as far as 160 miles distant from the main producing area in Bedfordshire. As the appearance of new buildings throughout this area is linked with the type of brick available, the Committee felt that the manufacture of a reasonably wide variety was a matter for which the industry had great responsibility. These views were expressed in a letter to the Pressed Brick Manufacturers' Association. In reply, the Committee was informed that several new varieties are now on the market, and it is hoped that this policy will be promoted by the Association. The recent production of an attractive grey facing brick by the London Brick Co., suitable for use in stone districts such as north Bedfordshire, and adjacent parts of Northamptonshire, is a useful addition to the varieties now available.

Nature Protection in U.S.S.R.

MR. G. ALIEV, of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, has described the text of a new law for the protection of Nature which was passed in the Republic in June 1959 (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Bull. 8; Oct. 1959). The Commission for the Protection of Nature of the Academy of Sciences played a leading part in preparing and supporting this law. The Act provides for the conservation of the resources of the inanimate world

and of living species, as well as the constitution of nature reserves and partial reserves. The same Act specifically mentions some interdicts: prohibits all economic activity within the reserves which would be contrary to their objectives; all interference with the places and objects preserved; all sale and purchase of reserved territories; all breaches of the hunting and fishing regulations; all uncontrolled introduction of exotic species; as well as undertakings which might result in air or water pollution, or begin or aggravate the process of erosion, the last being a source of grave problems in Azerbaijan. Any violation of the Act is considered a breach of Article 138 of the national constitution, which aims at "protecting and strengthening the sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet regime: public and socialist property". The Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan S.S.R. and certain other Government departments have been charged with a number of duties relating to the protection and restoration of natural resources as well as measures against pollution and erosion; scientific preparation of natural resources of development schemes, recommendations, as well as the spreading of the principles and aims of conservation of Nature.

Liquified Petroleum Gases

LIQUIFIED petroleum gases are petroleum hydrocarbons which are gaseous at normal temperatures and liquified by pressures of a few atmospheres; they are thus easily stored and transported as liquid in relatively light pressure containers. 'L.P.G.', as they are known, may be derived from wet natural gas containing propane, butane and higher hydrocarbons; refinery distillation, whence propane and butane are obtained from crude oil by pressure distillation; cracking and reforming refinery processes. In a paper by R. F. Horner, P. C. Jarvis and A. G. Turner, at a symposium on the Uses of Liquified Petroleum Gases at the Institute of Fuel during December 1959, are described composition and properties of 'L.P.G.'; historical market development; applications; supply and distribution; future uses in the United Kingdom. Among other advantages is facility of handling and burning; precautionary measures must be taken in design of plant, because of their higher vapour pressure than ordinary liquid fuels. Combustion characteristics of 'L.P.G.' are high calorific value, specific gravity and high volumetric proportion of air required for combustion compared with coal gas; low flame velocity and narrow limits of inflammability compared with coal gas, hydrogen or acetylene. In a complementary paper by J. P. Liotier at this symposium is an account of "Uses of 'L.P.G.' in Industry in France with Particular Reference to the Metallurgical and Ceramics Industries", following developments for commercializing propane in French industrial markets, originally sponsored by L'Utilisation Rationnelle des Gaz.

Progress in Microchemistry

THE *Microchemical Journal*, 3, 3 (August 1959), contains a collection of review articles on various aspects of microchemistry which might be considered to have a wider appeal than the normal quarterly volume of this journal. The collection, which is generally of a high standard, suffers from a great variation of treatment by the twelve authors who contribute the articles. As an example, the section dealing with "Progress in Elemental Quantitative