AMERICAN SCIENCE

SINCE returning to India two and a half years ago I have had many opportunities of discussing American achievements in science, especially in the domain of biology and agriculture with several Indian men of science. Many of these men, who have been to Great Britain and Germany for advanced training, are connected with the universities, colleges, agricultural or scientific institutions. The opinion expressed by a majority of them relative to American scientific work was that much of it was "spurious," "no scientific value," "will have to be carefully repeated," "take with a ton of salt all that comes from the New World," etc. Having worked in or visited many of the best scientific institutions in the United States, I was not only surprised but pained to hear such disparaging remarks. When I have pressed these men to point out instances of spurious work or when I have brought under their notice some of the fine researches that have definitely advanced knowledge, I have found that the prejudice in several cases was not based on any facts. Indeed some of these men, when a new problem turns up for solution, especially in the field of the agricultural sciences, go to American literature for guidance, while some others are busy investigating problems which have long ago been successfully solved in America.

I think that much of the prejudice is because the people here can not realize the extent of facilities and funds available for scientific work in America. An American scientist, interested in a problem, works all day and far into the night. He subscribes liberally to journals in which he is interested and reads a great deal not only in his own but collateral sciences. He very frequently attends scientific association or academy meetings so as to meet and exchange thoughts with others working along similar lines. He is ever on the alert to advance in the subject of his choice, and on his achievements depends his future. In India things are different. Funds and facilities are meager. The scientist is appointed to hold a "permanent position," which he relinquishes only after he reaches a certain age. If he is in a particular "cadre" he gets his annual salary increment irrespective of meagerness of scientific output. Those in the lower rungs of service who may be doing well have few chances of advancement because of rules of service and various other causes.

Scientific societies are few and the annual meetings are not well attended unless the universities or the government departments meet the "traveling allowances" of these men of science. Personal subscriptions to science journals is a luxury indulged by very, very few, indeed.

A third reason for the belief that American science is cheap is, perhaps, the American generosity in distributing "literature." Some of the experiment stations and other institutions send their bulletins, memoirs, etc., for the mere asking. The spirit behind this, in several cases that I know of, is an honest desire to help and for the spread and dissemination of knowledge. This is mistaken here for American "boosting." Many of the distributed bulletins have only local value, such as those reporting varietal trials or manurial tests or, say, those reporting the trend of prices of hogs as correlated to corn yields. Some stations send not one or two but four or five of the same bulletins. No wonder files of these in library corners come to be known as American trash. It is only when a publication is extremely inaccessible or rare that its value advances. It is the duty of an investigator to search and find out literature, rather than for an experiment station to bring it to the notice of workers the world over.

It is time for the experiment stations to revise their free distribution policy, especially in these depression days, and help also in acquiring proper recognition for American science.

"TAXILA"

INDIA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

MALNUTRITION IN THE AMAZON BASIN

ONE of the very interesting observations made during the recent magnetic expedition, August, 1931, to January, 1933, in South America, by the writer for the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, concerns the distribution of malnutrition in the Amazon Basin. While this matter has nothing to do with the prime purpose of the expedition, attention is called to it, since it may be of great interest to organizations that are concerned with the study of human life and settlement in the tropics.

It has long been pointed out by Stefansson and a number of other Arctic men that the civilizing influence of missions and Hudson's Bay Company stations is not entirely beneficial to the Eskimo. The reason is that malnutrition and deficiency diseases, which seem never to be found among these people as long as they live by their own hunting mode of existence, generally make their appearance as soon as