

more than a small number of persons. On the other hand, shortage of protective food elements affects many millions, and the effective absorption as well as the actual consumption of essential food elements requires consideration. Since this is affected, for example, by exercise and fresh air, these may also be ancillary factors in nutrition. The most serious and widespread form of malnutrition at the present time in Great Britain is probably the deficiency of calcium among children and adolescents, but there is also insufficient consumption of fresh fruit, vegetables and fats, although in the present state of knowledge the deficiency cannot be measured. The most pressing nutritional needs are, however, clearly indicated, and Government and industry carry a heavy responsibility for taking the necessary steps to meet these needs. Not the least valuable feature of this admirable broadsheet is a list of reports and books on nutrition.

### Roman Leicester

LEICESTER has saved her Roman remains. At a meeting of the City Council held on February 23, it was decided that the site of the Roman Forum, recently discovered in the course of the excavations carried out by Miss Kathleen Kenyon (see *NATURE*, 138, 356, 432) should be preserved as an open space for all time. As the site is centrally situated and had been chosen for the erection of municipal baths, it will be widely appreciated that the citizens of Leicester by this decision have shown a generous public spirit in their attitude towards the claims of the past and a consciousness of their obligation to the nation at large and to posterity, which is worthy of all praise. Of this monument, unique in Britain, the excavations have now proceeded to a point which reveals two sides of the Forum with one of the flanking streets; while it has been shown that the famous "Jewry Wall", one of the largest pieces of Roman work in England, was part of the west wall of the basilica. In later times this became a place of Christian worship, and in the early medieval period the Jewry Wall itself was utilized as the west end of a church. Tiles and bricks from the Forum were used in the construction of the adjacent late Saxon church of St. Nicholas, itself one of the notable monuments of Leicester. It has been pointed out that in declaring that this area shall remain in perpetuity an open space, the Council preserves in the heart of the city "the veritable birth-place of her commerce, her self-government, and her religion"; but in fact it does even more. For Miss Kenyon in the course of her excavations has discovered traces of pre-Roman settlement, which may well go back to the original British village founded on the banks of the Soar. The City of Leicester is to be congratulated on a decision which will earn the gratitude of all who are interested in the preservation of such relics of the past.

### An Experiment in Science Teaching

IN discussing some time ago certain aspects of university science teaching (*NATURE*, 129, 773-5; 1932), doubts were expressed of the present-day

necessity for, or desirability of, extensive spoon-feeding lecture and laboratory courses in universities. In proposing some changes, a plea was made for incorporating into science teaching some instruction in scientific method. An interesting development on these lines is being carried out by Prof. A. J. Riker in the University of Wisconsin in a laboratory class in plant pathology. Instead of using the same set of exercises repeated by each member of the class, the routine laboratory manipulations are acquired in carrying out simple investigations. Most members of the class work on different subjects, and compare the results freely. When a piece of work has been completed, a time is arranged and the student gives a short account and demonstration, after which the results are discussed by the other members of the class.

To facilitate the supervision, Prof. and Mrs. Riker have published in a limited edition "An Introduction to Research on Plant Diseases" (Madison, Wis.: Prof. A. J. Riker, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, 1936. 2.65 dollars), giving a short account, with references to selected original papers, of the methods usually needed. Some of the chapters serve to guide the student in making his own systematic search of the literature before starting experimental work in the laboratory, in formulating his problem and his proposed plan of work clearly and in preparing an adequate report of the results. The more a method of teaching departs from a formalized routine, the more does its effect depend upon the actual supervisor, who must judge how much and how little help may be given to each individual. Much experience and analysis are then necessary before a supervisor may be able to help others to apply his new methods. Not infrequently in pioneer work the 'right' course of action may be adopted for what others may regard as a 'wrong' reason or rationalization. Since, however, there is little doubt that the methods of scientific workers could help in dealing with some of the major problems troubling present-day civilization, any attempts at developing educational methods so as to foster scientific education deserve encouragement and close study.

### Institute of Chemistry

AT the fifty-ninth annual general meeting of the Institute of Chemistry, held on March 1, the president, Dr. R. H. Pickard, stated that the membership now includes a roll of nearly 6,800 members and 800 registered students. This year, on October 2, the Institute will attain the sixtieth anniversary of its original incorporation. The ideals of its founders have been steadily pursued. Chemistry, Dr. Pickard said, has established its place among the learned professions, and its practitioners are to be found in industry and commerce, in the Government and other public services. Chemists, by the very nature of their calling, have been for the most part of a retiring and modest disposition. Happily, there are also among them not a few who have developed a measure of business acumen. That is a matter of very great significance and importance. Everything