

Edward Divers, F.R.S. (1837-1912)

AMONG the British men of science and engineers who some sixty years ago laid the foundation of scientific instruction in Japan, none was more highly esteemed than Edward Divers. Born in London on November 27, 1837, he attended the City of London School and then studied under Hofmann at the old College of Chemistry, Oxford Street. He graduated M.D. at Queen's College, Galway, and later was lecturer in materia medica at Queen's College, Birmingham, and in medical jurisprudence at Middlesex Hospital Medical School. In 1873, at the invitation of the Public Works Department of Japan, he, with ten other Englishmen, went to that country to establish a College of Engineering. The first principal of the College was Henry Dyer (1848-1918), but on his return home in 1882, Divers was appointed to succeed him. Later, when the College became a part of the Imperial University, Divers became professor of chemistry in the Department of Science. He remained in Japan until 1899, when he was made emeritus professor. After his retirement, Divers settled in London, where his house became the 'Mecca' of Japanese students visiting England. He received honours from the Japanese Government, and a bronze statue of him was erected in the College courtyard. Most of Divers' original papers were contributed to the *Journals* of the Chemical Society and Society of Chemical Industry. Of the former society he became a vice-president and of the latter he served as president in 1905-6. He died on April 8, 1912, and was buried at Brookwood.

Town Life in Early Britain

DR. R. E. MORTIMER WHEELER'S Norman Lockyer Lecture for 1937, which was delivered on November 24, the first occasion on which this lecture of the British Science Guild has been given under the auspices of the British Association, in dealing with the beginnings of town life in Britain in the light of the evidence of recent archaeological investigation, was of marked importance for the history of the growth of civilization among the British people. It was at the same time a striking demonstration of the manner in which modern methods of archaeological research and interpretation are able to illuminate the dark places of history, and even in some instances modify in no small degree inferences from literary and other sources which have attained the status of dogma. Dr. Wheeler's purpose was to test the statement that town life was non-existent in pre-Roman Britain and to check our estimate of the Roman contribution to the urbanization of Britain. Excavations at Wheathampstead and Verulamium, he pointed out, have filled in details of the picture of the British 'city' in Kent and Hertfordshire as given by Cæsar, to whom they appeared as fortified woodland clearings. The recent excavations have shown that the size, situation, interdependence and cohesion of these settlements lift them out of the parochialism of a mere peasant kraal.

It is, however, in south-western Britain, on the downlands of Wessex and along the foothills of the

Welsh border that, as Dr. Wheeler went on to show, the most obvious and dramatic vestiges of our pre-Roman communities have survived. Sites of the Iron Age between central Hampshire and eastern Devon alone number upwards of seventy. Such fortified settlements, of which the recently excavated Maiden Castle is a conspicuous example, in their size and their domestic and defensive economy imply no small degree of authority and skill. They can only be designated 'towns' or 'cities' in a full sense of the term. In the light of these new facts—or newly verified facts—it is difficult to deprive the Celtic inhabitants of lowland Britain of the rights of citizenship. But there is another side of the picture; and this modification of the traditional view must not be pressed too far. As Dr. Wheeler indicated, one important element of city life is lacking, namely, commerce. The economic basis of these communities was agricultural and their sphere a given limited tract of country. At Maiden Castle, for example, where hundreds of objects have been recovered in four years' excavation, it is surprising to find how few had been brought from far afield. It was made clear in Dr. Wheeler's account of British organization on and after the Roman occupation that it was this lack of appreciation of the commercial element in civic life that caused the Romanization of Britain to make little permanent impression on the life of the people, except in so far as the villa system gave rise to something in the nature of a squirearchy, which was not foreign to native agricultural tradition—a tale not without a moral for our modern administrators of backward peoples.

Roman Pottery from Ewell, Surrey

It is to be inferred from the number of antiquities of the Roman period which have been discovered at Ewell in Surrey that the Roman township of which it is the modern representative was one of the more important of the stations which research has shown to have been strung out, probably for the convenience of travellers rather than for military purposes, along Roman Stane Street. A recent find of pottery fragments is of more than usual interest, owing to the fact that they are inscribed with names, of which indeed portions only remain, but sufficient to indicate that they have not previously been recorded among the names of the manufacturers of the pottery which was then being imported into Britain from the Continent in something like wholesale quantities. The fragments, which are described in *The Times* of November 8, were found in the south arm of Church Street, between High Street and the old church tower, and consist of two massive amphora handles, and the mouth portion of a mortarium. They are of buff ware and of second century type, the amphoræ of characteristic Roman form used for the transport of oil and wine, having thick, flat, ringed mouthpieces, made separately and joined to the neck and globular body. It is probable that the amphoræ of which these are fragments were made in Gaul. The handles were inscribed respectively *buche* and *oropo*, while the mortarium is inscribed

innim; these, as already mentioned, have not previously been recorded among potters' marks of the period.

Archæological Research and the Prehistory of India

AN instructive general view of the results of his journeys of archæological reconnaissance in Southern Persia as a whole was given by Sir Aurel Stein before the East India Association on November 16, when the Marquess of Zetland, Secretary of State for India, was in the chair. As might have been anticipated, Sir Aurel stressed the need for further and intensive archæological investigation, the aim of which should be to throw light on the dark period covering the Aryan invasion and the beginning of the historic era, when Cyrus, in the middle of the sixth century B.C., extended his dominions to Gandhara, including the whole Kabul valley. It is evident, he pointed out, that the Aryan invader, as may be gathered from the Rig-Veda, had been familiar with a considerable portion of the Indo-Iranian borderland long before they settled in the Punjab. Sir Aurel stressed the gratitude due for the archæological discoveries of recent years in the Indus Valley, when so much relating to the period of the Aryan invasion must remain conjectural; but, he went on to say, his own explorations of the past few years in the great provinces of Kerman, Fars, Khuzistan and Kermanshah, right up to Kurdistan, had left no doubt about an essentially uniform chalkolithic civilization having prevailed here wherever physical conditions permitted of settled life. Yet nowhere on the ground visited had there been found remains filling the wide chronological gap between the chalkolithic mounds traced in such abundance and the numerous burial sites of Baluchistan and Makran, dating at the earliest from the last centuries before our era. Not until sites abandoned much later than Mohenjodaro had been explored could we hope to learn of the actual state of civilization prevailing in the Indus Valley and beyond at the time of the Aryan invasion.

Destruction of Chinese Centres of Learning

AFTER the great Japanese earthquake of September 1, 1923, when three hundred thousand persons lost their lives, and the buildings of the Imperial University in Tokyo were destroyed, including the loss of about seven hundred thousand volumes in the library, an influential British committee was formed to replace the English section of the library, not only as a token of British sympathy but also as a tribute to the intellectual life of Japan. The calamity which evoked this appeal was a natural one, and unavoidable, but it is ironical now to have to record that Japan itself has destroyed many schools, colleges and universities in China by air raids. We express no opinion upon the causes of the conflict, but we do deplore the barbaric methods of modern warfare which seem to permit no discrimination between combatants and the civilian population, and bring desolation to seats of learning as brutally as to fortified places or other military centres. We are

therefore in complete sympathy with the righteous indignation expressed in a telegram organized by "For Intellectual Liberty", and signed in their individual capacity by more than one hundred members of twenty-two British universities, which was sent to the Minister of Education, Nanking, early last month. The replies received from the Shanghai Association of Universities and Colleges, and from representatives in Hankow of ten universities, show deep appreciation of the sympathetic message from England. "In name of world civilization," say the Hankow colleagues, "we thank you for your noble sentiment and moral support. We request you will give unswerving attention to prevent Far Eastern crisis and lend us further support in mobilising all British intellectual and humanitarian forces to the side of our common cause of international justice, which if humanity would exist must prevail."

Jews in Poland

THE Warsaw correspondent of *The Times* wrote on October 6 describing a system whereby Jewish students are being divided from 'Aryan' students in the lecture rooms of the Warsaw Polytechnic. Part of the benches have been marked for students belonging to a union almost exclusively controlled by 'Aryans', and others for the Jewish students' union, while a few seats for non-union students are left unmarked. The University of Warsaw has its seats numbered, and students sit according to the numbers on their identity cards. All 'Aryan' students, who have even numbers, occupy one half of the room. Unlike the Polytechnic, the University has no unmarked seats. It is stated that other educational establishments in Poland will probably follow suit. In the issue of *The Times* of November 18, appears a letter signed by Prof. George Barger, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Mr. T. Edmund Harvey, Dr. Julian Huxley, Prof. Norman Kemp Smith and Prof. J. B. Trend, referring to the apparent surrendering of the authorities of the high schools and universities to the agitation of anti-Semitic students. They state that the Minister of Education, a year ago, gave an assurance that separate benches would never be introduced in the universities. They ask, "Will it enhance the good name or the welfare of the Polish republic if such a spirit of intolerance is officially allowed and deliberately fostered in the very institutions in which are trained our future legislators and administrators?"

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

THE outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the eastern counties of England has produced the usual crop of suggestions, in the form of letters to the daily Press, for dealing with this scourge. It is evidently not widely known that a Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Committee is in existence, and published a substantial fifth Progress Report on its work so recently as early last summer (see *NATURE*, June 19, p. 1033). Replying to questions on November 15 in the House of Commons, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. W. S. Morrison, referred to the work of this Committee, and stated that "the most effective