Ancient Pottery of the Near East

POTTERY sherds, when they occur, are some of the most useful 'fossils' the prehistorian can have to deal with. When they are found with an industry, one can be almost certain that they are contemporary. It follows, then, that a known ware imported from some distant region and found associated with an unknown industry will date that industry with reasonable accuracy as being contemporary with the culture which manufactured the particular ware in question. This is not so true in the case of beads. It is a fact, of course, that when the association is real and there has been no subsequent chance introduction, the industry with which the bead of known date is found must be either contemporary with it or later in date. But beads have a long survival value; necklaces made of Egyptian beads were popular in late Victorian times, thousands of years after they were made. Prehistoric housewives, however, smashed crockery as freely as their descendants, and the survival value of a pottery vessel in use is limited. Pottery, then, is particularly useful for correlating in time various cultural levels from different regions. We can therefore be grateful to Marian Welker, who in a paper entitled "The Painted Pottery of the Near East in the Second Millenium B.C. and its Chronological Background", has brought together in convenient form a wealth of detail of the pottery in the Near East at this period (*Trans. Amer. Phil. Soc.*, N.S., **38**, part 2; September 1948). The paper is arranged by sites and areas, considering especially a number of Syrian localities. The author considers that Mesopotamian influence on the development of the wares in these sites is sporadic and that we shall have to look rather to an Iranian cradle for their origin. Chronological tables and some pages of illustrations are included, and the resulting volume will certainly prove of great use to students. There are also a catalogue of forms and several pages of references.

Society of Public Analysts and Other Analytical Chemists

THE seventy-fifth annual general meeting of the Society was held on March 9 in the meeting room of the Royal Society, Burlington House, London, W.1, with the retiring president, Mr. Lewis Eynon, in the chair. In his address, Mr. Eynon began by remarking on the Society's membership of 1,500, a doubling of the figure of ten years ago; he announced that, in alternate years in which no change of president occurs, the lecture which is delivered at the annual general meeting will in future be known as the Bernard Dyer Memorial Lecture, in honour of the late Dr. Bernard Dyer. The main theme of Mr. Eynon's address was the fundamental importance of analysis to the progress of chemistry and the necessity for giving a prominent place to analysis in the training of the student of chemistry. He said that although two former presidents of the Society had both deplored the inadequacy of training in analytical chemistry, little advance has been made in the status of analysis as a subject of instruction in the universities and technical colleges of Great Britain; indeed, the position has if anything become worse owing to the increasing claims of other branches of the science on a student's time. The great utilitarian value of training in analysis is too obvious and manifold when one considers its application to industry, medicine, water supply and Government inspection. The most important practicable step is for the establishment of chairs of analytical chemistry in universities and colleges and for a longer period of training for the student. With the present unsatisfactory conditions of training there is a serious danger that within the next twenty years the analyst himself will be "weighed in the balance and found wanting".

The following officers and members of Council were elected for the ensuing year: *President*, George Taylor; *Past Presidents serving on the Council*, F. W. F. Arnaud, Lewis Eynon, E. B. Hughes, G. Roche Lynch, S. E. Melling, G. W. Monier-Williams; *Vice-Presidents*, C. A. Adams, H. E. Cox, J. R. Nicholls, J. G. Sherratt (chairman, North of England Section), J. Sword (chairman, Scottish Section); *Honorary Treasurer*, J. H. Hamence; *Honorary Secretary*, K. A. Williams; *Other Members of Council*, N. L. Allport, R. C. Chirnside, J. F. Clark, D. C. Garratt, J. G. A. Griffiths, E. T. Illing, J. King, J. E. Page, C. J. Regan, F. A. Robinson, N. Strafford, A. M. Ward, A. Lees (honorary secretary, North of England Section), R. S. Watson (honorary secretary, Scottish Section).

New Grassland Research Station at Hurley, Berks

A NEW Grassland Research Station for Great Britain is being established by the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland in co-operation with the Agricultural Research Council. The new Station will occupy an area of 500 acres at Hurley, Berkshire, adjoining the new Berkshire Farm Institute. Its work will be the investigation of problems relating to the sward and its production and maintenance under different conditions, but mainly under those of medium and low rainfall. The existing Grassland Improvement Station at Drayton, Stratford-on-Avon, will be transferred to and amalgamated with the new Station. The work at Hurley will be carried out in close co-operation with that of the Welsh Plant Breeding Station at Aberystwyth, the Scottish Society for Research in Plant Breeding and other research institutions, and it will be under the scientific supervision of the Agricultural Research Council. The Station will be controlled by a Governing Body which will be constituted as a company limited by guarantee and without share capital, grant-aid being given by the Ministry of Agriculture. The thirteen members who have been appointed to the Governing Body, and of which Prof. H. G. Sanders is chairman, provide a balanced representation of scientific knowledge and practical farming experience.

Liquid Helium-3

IN the *Physical Review* of January 15, p. 303, S. G. Sydoriak, E. R. Grilly and E. F. Hamel report that on October 13, 1948, they succeeded in condensing pure helium-3. This is especially interesting, since several physicists, F. London, Tisza, and others, have expressed doubts that helium-3 would liquefy. Twenty c.c. (measured at S.T.P.) of helium-3 were used, and condensation took place at the bottom of a 1·2-mm. bore stainless steel capillary immersed at a depth of 5–10 mm. in the liquid helium well. Condensation was assumed to be taking place when the equilibrium pressure in the capillary was independent of the volume of helium which remained in the mercury manometer connected to the room-temperature end of the capillary. From the data obtained, $3{\cdot}3_4°$ K. was chosen as the critical temperature of helium-3. The vapour pressure measure-

ments showed that at 1·2° K. the vapour pressure of helium-3 was thirty-five times that of helium-4; helium-3 was suitable for thermometry at low temperatures down to 0·5° K. and perhaps lower; the normal boiling point of helium-3 was 3·2° K., and by extrapolation to the critical temperature the critical pressure was 875 mm. of mercury. A value of 0·041 gm./c.c. for the critical density was deduced.

Birds in London

In April 1947 the Minister of Works appointed a Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks (England and Wales). For its general objectives the Committee decided to: (1) make suggestions for increasing the resident population of birds, their number and variety; (2) make suggestions for attracting migratory birds and for inducing unusual visitors to stay longer; (3) select competent persons as observers and reporters.

The Committee has now reported, and the results of its deliberations have been set out in a pamphlet, "Birds in London" (H.M. Stationery Office. 9*d*.). The first duty was the appointment and guidance of competent observers, and it is their statements which provide most of the material in the pamphlet. They show how successful has been the policy of developing the London bird sanctuaries, which were originally set up so long ago as 1923.

Young Children

To mark the year of its silver jubilee, the Nursery School Association of Great Britain has begun the publication of a new quarterly journal. This follows the formation of the World Council of Early Childhood Education after an international meeting in Prague, in August 1948, and the new journal is intended to act as a link between all who are interested in the education of young children in any part of the world. Volume I of *Young Children* contains articles on the use of water play in the nursery, the stages of education which follow the nursery school and the links between home and school. The new journal has been produced unpretensively and should strengthen a side of education which has been much neglected by existing journals. It is doubtful, however, if the new journal will survive unless the price is reduced.

Hundredth Meeting of the Genetical Society

The Genetical Society of Great Britain, founded in 1919 by William Bateson, will hold its hundredth meeting during June 30–July 1, in Cambridge. To mark the occasion guest speakers will review the early days of genetics, and there will also be comprehensive demonstrations of genetical work now in progress in Great Britain. Genetical societies abroad have been informed of this meeting, to which all geneticists are cordially invited. Details may be obtained from the secretaries, G. Pontecorvo, Department of Genetics, University, Glasgow, W.2, or H. G. Callan, Institute of Animal Genetics, University, Edinburgh 9.

The Night Sky in April

Full moon occurs on April 13d. 04h. 08m., U.T., and new moon on April 28d. 08h. 02m. The following conjunctions with the moon take place: April 9d. 13h., Saturn 3° S.; April 20d. 03h., Jupiter 5° N.; April 29d. 21h., Mercury 0·7° S. Mercury is in superior conjunction on April 13 and is not favourably placed for observation until later in the month; the planet sets 1h. 45m. after the sun on April 30, and can be seen in the western sky. Venus, in superior conjunction on April 16, is too close to the sun for favourable observation throughout the month. Mars rises about the same time as the sun during April, and cannot be observed. Jupiter is a morning star, rising at 3h. 20m., 2h. 30m. and 1h. 35m., at the beginning, middle and end of the month, respectively, and can be seen low down for a few hours before sunrise. Saturn sets in the early morning hours and is visible throughout the greater part of the night. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows: April 1d. 19h. 46 3m., 45 Arie. (*D*); April 7d. 00h. 31·4m., *c* Gemi. (*D*); April 11d. 20h. 56·3m., η Virg. (*D*). *D* refers to disappearance, and the latitude of Greenwich is assumed. The Lyrid meteor shower is active about April 18–24. A total eclipse of the moon, visible at Greenwich, takes place on April 13, the circumstances of which are given as follows: moon enters penumbra, 01h. 31·6m.; enters umbra, 02h. 27·7m.; total eclipse begins, 03h. 28·0m.; middle of eclipse, 04h. 10·9m.; total eclipse ends, 04h. 53·8m.; moon leaves umbra, 05h. 54·1m.; leaves penumbra, 06h. 50·3m. A partial eclipse of the sun, visible at Greenwich, occurs on April 28, its magnitude being 0·41 at Greenwich, where it begins at 6h. 21m., reaches its greatest phase at 7h. 15m., and ends at 8h. 14m.

Announcements

On the joint recommendation of the presidents of the Royal Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Council of the Institution of Civil Engineers has awarded the James Alfred Ewing Medal for 1948 to Sir Edward Appleton. The medal is awarded annually, and was founded in 1936 in memory of Sir Alfred Ewing. This award has come appropriately when Sir Edward has just taken up his appointment as vice-chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, a position which Sir Alfred Ewing occupied with such distinction.

Dr. R. P. Linstead, director of the Chemical Research Laboratory, Teddington, since 1945, has accepted the invitation of the University of London to succeed Sir Ian Heilbron as professor of organic chemistry and director of the Organic Chemistry Laboratories at the Imperial College of Science and Technology as from April 1, or as soon afterwards as can be arranged.

M. Gaston Dupouy has been elected *correspondant* for the Section of General Physics of the Paris Academy of Sciences in succession to Prof. W. J. de Haas, who has been elected a foreign associate.

A division of the Royal Aeronautical Society has recently been formed in South Africa on the same lines as those formed in Australia and New Zealand in October 1948. Associate fellows will still be elected by the parent body of the Society in London; but otherwise these Divisions of the Commonwealth will possess a fully self-governing status and will be free to develop along their own national lines.

The Royal Photographic Society will be holding its annual exhibition at 16 Princes Gate, London, S.W.7, in two parts: part 1 (pictorial and colour), September 9–October 2; part 2 (scientific, Nature, medical, record, press, commercial, industrial, technical and radiographic), October 8–26. Admission will be free. Entries must be received by July 23, and entry forms may be obtained from the Secretary at the above address.