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-