

ners of tanks, of a slow-motion variety.

But throughout history until now, horses and foot soldiers have been mainstays of fighting at this field. Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III, who fought the first battle or record at Armageddon, against the Syrian Kings, rode in a glittering chariot of electrum, and part of his soldiers' booty was a collection of gold and silver chariots and horses that had belonged to Syrian troops.

Surprise tactics have won many victories at this pass. Pharaoh Thutmose III won by marching quickly north and rushing his troops through the narrow pass, a plan which Allenby used successfully against the Turks over 3,000 years later.

Although the plain has been a battleground throughout history, because the pass is a bottleneck controlling the route

between Egypt and the Tigris-Euphrates countries, the fortress has not been maintained since before the time of Christ. Prof. Edward Robinson stood on a mound and looked over wheat fields in the region a century ago, and wondered where the fort-city of Megiddo, or Armageddon, lay. Between the World War and this war, American archaeologists have dug into the mound where Robinson stood, finding twenty layers of ruins, representing the succession of fortified cities that overlooked the plain from about 3500 B. C. to 350 B. C.

The city 20 times rebuilt testifies to Armageddon's numerous battles and other disasters. In later times, Armageddon has seen clashes between Byzantines and Arabs, Crusaders and Moslems, and Napoleon lost near there the battle of Acre.

*Science News Letter, May 17, 1941*

writings regarding Christ, this episode has occurred before. Prof. Casson pronounced the new-found manuscript, however, a long version of Christ's supposed letter and in some respects quite unparalleled.

Written on a single sheet of papyrus, almost complete, the new record of the episode dates probably from the seventh century A.D., Prof. Casson concludes.

He translates the letters:

"Abgar, Toparch of the city of Edessa, to Jesus the Benevolent Saviour who has appeared in the city of Jerusalem, greetings.

"I have heard about you and about the cures which you effect without the use of medicines or herbs. For it is said that you cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, that you cleanse lepers and drive out unclean spirits and demons, and that you heal men tortured with chronic diseases and that you raise the dead. When I heard all these reports about you. I made up my mind that one of two things were possible: either as God descended from heaven you are accomplishing these miracles, or as the Son of God. And because of this I am now writing to beg you to come to me and cure me of my disease. For I have also heard that the Jews are muttering against you and want to do you evil. Mine is a very small city, but honored, and it is sufficient for both of us.

"Letter of Jesus Christ, Son of God, to Abgar, Toparch of Edessa.

"You are blessed, and blessed is your city, called Edessa. You are blessed because you have had faith in me although you have not seen me. For it is written of me that those who have seen me have no trust in me, but that those who have not seen me will believe and abide in me. Because you have shown your trust in me, preparations for your health will be made for you in every way. With respect to my coming to you, of which you wrote, I am obliged to fulfill these duties for which I was sent here by my Father, and, after doing so, to be taken up to my Father who sent me. But I am sending you one of my disciples who will cure you of your disease and give eternal life and peace to you and all of yours, and who will make your city safe so that none of your enemies may conquer it. Therefore I have written this letter in my own hand and sealed it with my seal."

In the papyri which the Colt expedition found during excavations at Auja Hafir, in southern Palestine, four other

ARCHAEOLOGY

# Letters Purported To Be Correspondence With Christ

## Unparalleled Documents Shown to Archaeologists Seem To Be Letter From Sick Syrian Asking Cure, and Reply

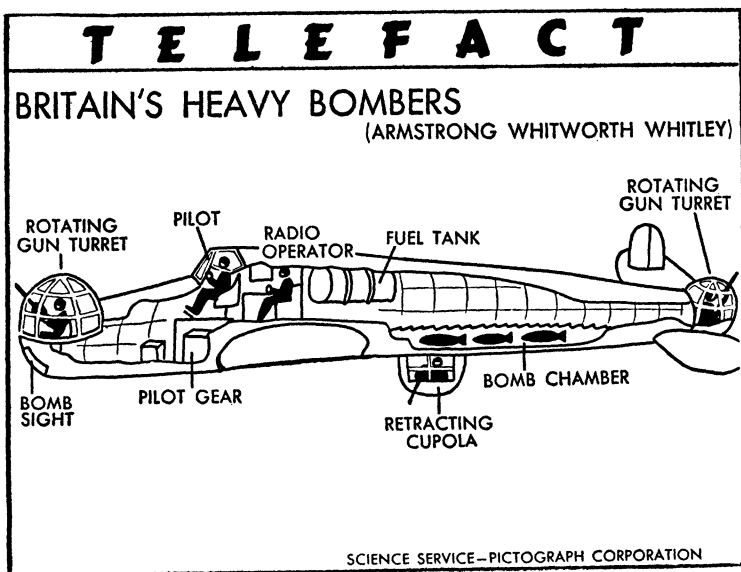
**A** LETTER purporting to be written to Jesus Christ by a sick Syrian ruler, offering Christ a haven from His enemies in exchange for healing, and Christ's own letter of reply!

A copy of this rarely interesting correspondence has come to light in Palestine, among a mass of old papyrus writ-

ings found by the Colt Archaeological Institute of New York.

Given to Prof. Lionel Casson of New York University for study, he read the letters, as he has translated them before the Classical Association of the Atlantic States meeting in Washington.

Among the doubtful, or apocryphal,



theological writings have recently been identified, Prof. Casson said. A group of New York University classics department professors are working on the texts, which were all written in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D.

Fragmentary groups of pages from two papyrus Bibles containing the Gospel of John have been identified, and also random pages from the Epistles of St. Paul, as well as part of the apocryphal book, the Acts of St. George.

*Science News Letter, May 17, 1941*

#### MEDICINE

## New, Life-Saving Treatment For Bleeding Stomach Ulcers

**Treatment Consists Simply in Giving Patient Plenty To Eat and Drink; Death Rate Drops From 9% to 3%**

**A** NEW and revolutionary treatment for bleeding stomach ulcers, credited with saving as many lives as the sulfa drugs are saving from pneumonia deaths, was announced by Dr. T. Grier Miller, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, at the meeting in Boston of the American College of Physicians.

A drop in the death rate from 9% to 3% has been achieved, Dr. Miller said, without the development of a new drug, without discovering the cause of ulcer, and without the use of any special diet.

The treatment consists simply in promptly giving the patient plenty to eat and to drink, even if his ulcer is still

causing bleeding. This treatment is directly opposite to the usual starvation treatment in which the patient was given nothing by mouth so long as there was any bleeding.

The type of diet, so long as it is not irritating, is less important than prompt and adequate feeding of the patient, Dr. Miller said. Operation in the midst of hemorrhage is rarely, if ever, justified, he added.

"Far better results, both as regards the survival of the patient and his comfort, may be expected" from this new treatment, Dr. Miller declared.

*Science News Letter, May 17, 1941*

#### CHEMISTRY

## Salt Water May Be Made Fresh By Treatment With Plastics

**B**Y TREATING salt water with synthetic resins, closely similar to plastics used for radio cabinets, cigarette cases, and a host of other things, it can be made fresh. Ships at sea, and mid-ocean island air bases, may benefit by these products.

Speaking before the American Chemical Society in St. Louis, Dr. Robert J. Myers, of the Resinous Products and Chemical Company, described these new plastic uses. In his paper, prepared in collaboration with Drs. John W. Eastes, Harold C. Cheetham and Frederick J. Myers, he stated that this is the first use of plastics as chemical entities. Previous uses have been mainly concerned with their physical attributes, such as hardness, color, durability, etc.

When sodium chloride, ordinary salt, is dissolved in water, its atoms break up

into ions. There are chlorine ions, which have an electrical negative charge; and sodium ions, which carry positive charges. Most of the compounds dissolved in sea water, or the impurities in tap water, are similarly ionized.

In the molecular framework of which the resin consists are sodium atoms. When water, for example, which is hard because of the ions of calcium, magnesium and iron it contains, is passed over such a resin, the sodium atoms exchange places with the hardness-producing ions. After all the sodium atoms are used up from the plastic, it can be treated with a salt solution, which puts them back again.

It is also possible to prepare the synthetic resins so that they take out the sodium and other positive ions from the solution, putting hydrogen ions in.

Treating tap water first with one, then with the other, of these "ion exchangers," leads to the production of a high quality "distilled" water, which compares favorably with, and in some cases exceeds, laboratory-distilled water in excellence," said Dr. Myers.

He cited other possible uses as follows:

"The resinous ion exchangers may be used in the softening of water for industrial, municipal and domestic use. They may be used in the partial or complete removal of salts from water, sugar solutions, protein solutions, biological and pharmaceutical media. They are of value in the recovery of traces of copper and other metals from dilute solutions, and in the removal of iron and objectionable acids from waters and industrial products. Other applications undoubtedly await the mere application of this new tool."

He pointed out that the zeolite process accomplishes some of these results in a similar way, but it cannot be used with solutions that are very acidic or alkaline. The resins work with either, and also with very hot solutions. The new process, he stated, was developed by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, of Great Britain.

*Science News Letter, May 17, 1941*

## May Put Iron in Foods

**I**NOSITOL, the anti-baldness vitamin (for mice—not men) could be used to make explosives, but chemists expressed the hope that it will be used for home defense on the nutrition front.

This sugar-like substance in the form of phytin combines with iron to make an almost pure white compound which "is being considered as a convenient form of adding iron in connection with the program of fortification of foods now being undertaken by the government," Dr. P. L. Pavcek and Dr. H. M. Baum, of the Biological Laboratory of Anheuser-Busch, Inc., reported.

Inositol is present in large amounts in corn where it is combined with phosphoric acid as phytin. Inositol, in the form of phytin, forms compounds with various metals, among which is iron. The fact that inositol forms explosive compounds with nitric acid has been known since 1850 but only in 1932 was it deemed important enough to serve as a basis of a patent.

*Science News Letter, May 17, 1941*

*Homesickness* attacks all races, and, so far as scientists have investigated, it is not affected by intelligence, education, or culture.