

Calakmul, Yucatan

FURTHER particulars of the recently discovered Maya city of Calakmul, in the south of Campeche, Yucatan, dated by its sculptured monuments as belonging to the Old Empire, A.D. 364-551, have been published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington (*News Service Bulletin*, vol. 2, No. 34). The information is derived from a report by Dr. S. G. Morley on the results of an expedition of the Institution which left Washington for Calakmul in April last. Forty-one additional monuments were discovered, bringing the total number up to 103, the largest number yet found on any Central American site. The dates on 45 monuments have been deciphered. Among the more notable discoveries were the quarry from which the stone was taken with two large blocks side by side, partially quarried, just as they were left by the builders, a huge flat outcrop of limestone in which were sculptured figures of six prisoners with their arms tied behind them by ropes and a large sculptured monument portraying a priest grasping a spear in his right hand, which was erected in A.D. 472. Owing to the luxuriance of the vegetation only a single building has been left standing. A survey map of the central part of the site, the civic and religious centre, has been made. The importance of the site lies in the fact that, lying half way between the earlier cities of northern Guatemala and the later cities of northern Yucatan, it fills in a geographical 'blind-spot' and bridges the gap between the two regions. It is within four days' journey by mule from Uxactun, the oldest city of the Maya civilisation in northern Guatemala. The foundation of the city, or at least its attainment of sufficient economic importance to permit the inhabitants to mark the five year periods by the erection of monuments, would appear to coincide with the later part of the First Period of the Old Empire, when Maya culture was expanding throughout the Yucatan peninsula.

Paintings in Ancient Palestine

A DISCOVERY of special interest at Teleilat Ghassul in Palestine is reported by the Rev. J. G. Duncan in the current issue of *Ancient Egypt* (Pt. 3, 1932). On this site, which is conjecturally identified with the ancient Sodom, three buildings, evidently not temples or palaces, but dwelling-houses, have been brought to light which date, at the latest, from 2,000 B.C., when the city was finally destroyed. In two of them the room-walls proved unexpectedly large, being 19 ft. and 20 ft. in length respectively. It was not known previously that dwellings of this size were in use in Palestine at this early stage of civilisation. What, however, was of even greater interest was the fact that these walls had been decorated with paintings, a single subject covering the whole wall, thus arguing developed artistic skill. With the exception of a cistern at Ophel, attributed doubtfully to the Byzantine age, wall paintings had not been discovered previously in ancient Palestine. The paintings, which are on plaster, have suffered from various causes, including the damp soil, which may explain the apparent absence of wall-paintings on

excavated sites. It is just possible to make out the subject of two of the paintings. One is apparently a religious scene and shows several, six or seven, human figures gazing towards a shining object in front of which stands a smaller figure, facing the others; and the second is a landscape or hunting scene, in which the only well-preserved figure is a bird, painted with a master's touch. The colours, light and dark red, brown in various shades, black, yellow and white are the same as appear in the painted pottery. The site, which is being excavated by P. Mallon, is somewhat obscure in its cultural and chronological relations. It appears to be of late neolithic or early copper age date.

Exhibition of Scientific Instruments and Apparatus

A PRELIMINARY announcement of the Physical Society's twenty-third Annual Exhibition of Scientific Instruments and Apparatus which is to be held at the Imperial College, South Kensington, on January 3-5 has already appeared in these columns (Dec. 10, p. 887). Particulars are given there of the times of opening and of the times and titles of the discourses. The catalogue of the exhibition, which is used by many as a reference book during the year, has now been published, and copies may be obtained from the Exhibition Secretary, at the office of the Society, 1, Lowther Gardens, Exhibition Road, London, S.W.7 (9d. post free). We are glad to notice that although the name of the Optical Society no longer appears on the catalogue, since it has amalgamated with the Physical Society of London, the optical instrument trade is as well represented as in former years. The Physical Society is making an important contribution to the scientific instrument trade by the inclusion of a section for apprentices and learners at the Annual Exhibition. The catalogue shows that the exhibits in the research and experimental section will be of great interest, and that the trade section, which forms the principal part of the exhibition, will include many important new developments. The value of the exhibition is enhanced by the excellent response of those taking part in it to the desire expressed by the organising committee, that the working parts of instruments or apparatus should be exposed to view. In some instances exhibitors have provided working models. We understand that the discourses to be delivered at the exhibition will be fully illustrated by experiments, lantern slides, and cinematograph films.

Floodlighting

THE floodlighting of many of London's famous buildings last year was a great popular success. It also gave engineers a unique opportunity of studying the problem critically. In a paper on the subject which appears in the General Electric Co.'s (G.E.C.) *Journal* for November, Mr. T. E. Ritchie begins a very thorough discussion of the subject. He shows the fallacy of thinking that floodlighting is objectionable because it is 'unnatural'. The same objection might be urged against the inside lighting or the warming of a building or even against the building