

THIS issue of *Current Science* contains also a number of valuable scientific articles. Of especial interest is that by S. Rangaswami and M. Sreenivasaya on the disease of sandal. The discovery, that this disease is insect borne, has resulted from research work in which the biochemists of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and the entomologists of the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, have been prominent. This investigation provides an excellent example of the value of well-organised team work, and it should result in the control and the gradual elimination of this disease from the Madras and Mysore forests. We congratulate the editor and his collaborators on the high measure of success achieved by *Current Science* and we note with pleasure that in future the journal is to appear fortnightly instead of monthly.

Hittite Art

A REPRESENTATION of a bull in silver from recent excavations in Anatolia, and described as the most important work of art of Hittite origin yet discovered, is to be exhibited at the forthcoming Antique Dealers Fair to be held at Grosvenor House, London, W.1. The figure is seven inches high, and is mounted on bronze and inlaid with gold. It is dated tentatively at the third millennium B.C. As an evidence of high artistic culture, it is without parallel among Hittite antiquities. An obvious comparison with Sumerian bulls from Ur is suggested. To this, reference is made by Prof. Ernst Herzfeld, whose authority on Hittite objects is unquestionable. In an interview with a representative of *The Times*, which appears in the issue of September 16, he discusses the affinities of the Hittite bull with other finds from Anatolia and elsewhere, mentioning in particular the figurines from mounds in south Russia and the Caucasus, of which the best known are in the Hermitage Museum, and a terra-cotta bull (*Bos primigenius*) from Nihawand in his own collection, which belongs to the Early Bronze Age of the third millennium B.C. Prof. Herzfeld also directs attention to the principle, important in discussion of the qualities and characteristics of art in the ancient East, and of a relevance here, which will be immediately apparent to archaeologists, that down to Achaemenid times verisimilitude in line is frequently sacrificed to an artistic convention in attitude, which assimilates one species to another. This is apparent in this example in the manner in which the legs of a bull are represented in an attitude essentially capriform. It is thus evident that even at the early date to which this bull is assigned, an art, Hittite in all essentials, already conformed to a generalised eastern convention.

Fen Drainage Problems

IN view of the contiguity of the fen district to the locality of the Norwich meeting of the British Association, the presentation at the meeting of a paper on problems in fen drainage was appropriate. Major R. G. Clark, the writer of the paper, pointed out that there is an estimated total of 1,279,000 acres

of fenland and lowland in England and Wales protected by artificial works from inundation by the sea or flooding from the rivers conducting the surplus water to the sea, and that the Bedford Level, which extends into the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, Isle of Ely and other counties, comprises about 836,000 acres of fenland. The Bedford Level is traversed by the Rivers Nene and Ouse which serve to subdivide it into the North, Middle and South Levels.

ARTIFICIAL works in this district date back to about 1631, when Cornelius Vermuyden, the celebrated Dutch engineer, was commissioned to convert the Level area into 'summer lands', which he did by constructing various barrier banks, new cuts, etc. He appears, however, to have allowed insufficiently for the shrinkage of the newly-protected land, mainly composed of peat, in illustration of which, a photograph was shown of a column at Whittlesea Mere, the top of which marks the original level of the ground when drained in 1851 and now stands 11 ft. above it. The paper described the means adopted to produce evacuation of the water, and instanced the modern pumping installation at St. Germans consisting of three oil-driven units of the Premier-Crossley horizontal *vis-à-vis* type, each of 1,000 b.h.p., coupled through reduction gears to a horizontal centrifugal pump constructed by Messrs. Gwynne's Pumps, Ltd., the capacity of each pump varying from 1,000 to 300 tons per minute according to tidal conditions. Mentioning that the Middle Level Board has spent more than half a million sterling on new works and maintenance during the past twelve years, Major Clark concluded with the affirmation that, in future, State assistance will become necessary, urging that it will be a national disaster if these large food-producing areas of fen and lowland are not maintained and protected.

Meare Lake Village, 1935

AN exceptionally interesting find in the excavations of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society at Meare Lake Village of the present season, which ended on September 19, is that of a timber substructure of a remarkable and unusual character in one of the mounds. It consists of a squared arrangement of oak beams, 11½ feet in length, crossed at the angles and secured by oak piles or corner posts placed vertically through the mortice holes. The arrangement was almost square, the area enclosed by the timbers being fifty-three square feet. The inner area was crossed by one large oak beam; and poles of alder and silver birch laid out in parallel order in both directions under the oak beams combined to form a raft-like structure. The earlier rectangular building on this structure would appear, judging from the position of piles around the area, to have been superseded by the more usual round dwelling, of which the superimposed hearths were found in the position and relation in which they were to be expected. A somewhat similar square timber structure was found in the west village some years ago, and traces of rectangular huts were found