

Excavations at Armant, 1935-36

IMPORTANT discoveries are announced in the report of the expedition of the Egypt Exploration Society to Armant, which has been at work in Upper Egypt since last autumn under the direction of Mr. Oliver Myers. The expenses of the expedition were borne entirely by Sir Robert Mond. It had three objectives. Of these the first was unsuccessful. A fortnight's search failed to find graves containing the Saharan pottery, of which sherds are found scattered on the low desert. The settlements and graves of these people seem to have weathered away; but it is probable that they visited Egypt before the known Pre-dynastic periods. The second object was to investigate the origins of the combed burnished pottery closely resembling Badarian. This proved to belong to an intrusive people of the Proto-dynastic period. More than a hundred graves were opened, and although the top of the cemetery had been removed and the contents disturbed, so that no object of intrinsic value was retrieved, what remained was of the greatest interest. The people were small, and may have been of two distinct races. Possibly they practised bull-worship, for the more important members of the tribe were buried with their cattle. The oxen were crouched in pear-shaped graves facing the main burial. The pottery had the incised chevron pattern around the rim; and some showed the incised white decoration found on the Nubian pots of the Middle Kingdom. Agate lunates hafted to form arrows resemble those from the tomb of the wazir of Den of slightly later date.

THE expedition's greatest success, however, was achieved in the town, where the site of Cleopatra's lake was discovered without difficulty. A hollow filled with green putrid water in the middle of the town, still sacred as having curative properties, soon showed on excavation the walls, preserved to within two or three metres of the original surface, with a stairway leading down one side. Dressed stones in the *suq* square proved to be part of a pylon of Tothmes III, celebrating his victories over the Nubians. Among other representations of his spoils is the first known example in Egyptian art of the rhinoceros, its capture being described on a neighbouring stela. Among other notable finds are a record of two additional *set* festivals of Rameses II, and a cubit divided duodecimally, antedating the supposed introduction of this method of division by the Greeks by a thousand years.

Zoological Society of London

THE 107th annual report of the Zoological Society of London for 1935 submitted to the annual meeting on April 29 contains records of the breeding of more than fifty species of mammals, twenty birds and five reptiles at Regent's Park, and twenty-seven species of mammals and seven of birds at Whippsnade. The pathological report records that out of an average population of 824 mammals and 1,631 birds, 215 mammals or 26 per cent, the lowest for the past ten years, and 539 birds or 33 per cent, died and were

examined by the department. Injuries and accidents accounted for 183 or 20·2 per cent of the deaths, digestive diseases for 142 or 15·6 per cent, and respiratory diseases for 138 or 15·2 per cent. Two monkeys, two antelopes, a wild pig, a hedgehog and a desert cavy died of tuberculosis; twenty-one birds and a reptile of mycosis; nineteen mammals, five birds and three reptiles of ricketts and bone diseases; two mammals and thirty-five birds of urinary diseases; seven mammals, twenty-four birds and two reptiles of blood and circulatory diseases. Eight of the birds died of old age, including a snowy egret which had lived nearly fifteen years in the Gardens, and an Indian kite which had lived there more than fourteen years. Four mammals, including the rare okapi, ten birds and nine reptiles died from parasites. A new elephant house to replace the 1869 building is to be completed by 1937, while original ideas to be carried out at Whippsnade include open air collections of chimpanzees and gibbons on islands with growing trees; as these apes will not cross water, visitors will be able to watch them without intervening bars. In a Studio of Animal Art, to be built near the Society's offices, living models of lions, tigers and other creatures will be available for classes of up to twenty-four students.

Present State of Bird-Ringing in Britain

IT will be interesting to see if the number of wild birds ringed in 1935 for migration study in the British Isles, namely, 46,430, the first decline for many years, 1934 having 49,651, approaches the limit of work possible for field ornithologists working without financial assistance from official bodies. Of the leading ringers, Dr. H. E. Moon, of Cumberland, marked 5,205 birds (1,762 song-thrushes, 970 lapwings, 877 blackbirds, 379 starlings and 154 swallows), and excepting 1934, he has marked more birds than any other ornithologist each year since 1924 (*British Birds*, April 1936). Since bird-ringing began in Great Britain under the organisation of H. F. Witherby in 1909 (when 2,171 birds were marked), 482,510 birds have been ringed, chiefly nestlings; but the proportion of adult birds is increasing with the use of small 'traps' and bird-observatories, last year's totals including 30,364 nestlings and 16,066 'trapped' birds. Of the total number of birds ringed since marking began, the leading figures are: song-thrush 53,108, blackbird 42,469, starling 37,592, swallow 34,243, lapwing 27,928, chaffinch 19,684, greenfinch 18,643, red-breast 17,008, common tern 15,245 and black-headed gull 12,902, Sandwich tern 11,630, hedge-sparrow 11,317, house-marten 9,996, willow-warbler 8,492, linnet 7,659, yellow bunting 3,953. The proportion of recoveries is not always the same, and out of 3,037 spotted flycatchers marked, only seven have been recovered, only one out of 1,092 garden-warblers, and one out of 625 grey wagtails, while out of 1,337 arctic terns marked, two have been recovered, and out of 8,492 willow-warblers three have been reported. In some species the recoveries reached 23 per cent.