

To-day the entrance from the Indian Ocean is by way of the narrow Straits of Bab El-Mendeb, inside which lies a shallow sill having a maximum depth of about 100 metres. Climatic conditions and the basin-like profile of the Red Sea are the predominating factors controlling the hydrological conditions, salinities and temperatures being generally higher than those in the Gulf of Aden, while, in contrast to the open ocean, there is no great difference of temperature between the surface and the bottom layers of water. These physical features may well mean that the Red Sea fauna is (and has been) isolated to a considerable degree, this having favoured the evolution of new forms. There are certainly good indications from earlier work and the survey in the Gulf of Aqaba that the Red Sea contains a considerable number of indigenous sub-species and species. There is therefore the expectation that continued study of the fauna of the Red Sea and detailed comparison with that of the Indian Ocean will not only indicate something of the extent and direction of evolution but will also permit some correlation with the time factor.

## OBITUARIES

### Sir Alexander Rodger, O.B.E.

THE death of Sir Alexander Rodger on September 30 last at the age of seventy-five brings to an end a fine career in the best traditions of forestry work.

Rodger was educated at Blair Lodge School and from there passed into the Royal Engineering College, Coopers Hill, in 1895. He obtained a diploma in forestry three years later and went out to Burma, where he served until 1911. In the latter year he was appointed instructor at the Forest College, Dehra Dun, and forest economist in the new Research Institute which had been inaugurated by Lord Curzon in 1907. He returned to Burma in 1913, and during the First World War was deputy controller for timber supplies under the Munitions Board, having charge of the large shipments of timber that went from Rangoon for India and the Middle East. He received the O.B.E. in recognition of his good work.

Rodger acted as conservator of forests in Tenasserim during 1920-22 and then was sent home in charge of the Burma exhibit to be erected at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. As will be remembered, the Burma exhibit became one of the principle objects of interest at that great Exhibition.

After some leave at home, Rodger returned to India as president of the Forest Research Institute and College at Dehra Dun early in 1925. In the following year he was appointed inspector-general of forests to the Government of India, this being the first time these two posts were held by one man. As a result of the fine work done by the new Research Institute during the First World War, at its close the Government of India had sanctioned the construction of a very much larger Institute and new buildings, and these were opened by the Viceroy of India in November 1920, Rodger at that time receiving the honour of a knighthood.

Among official publications for which he was responsible Rodger wrote "The Handbook of the

Forest Products of Burma" and also undertook the publication of the second edition of Lace's "List of Trees and Shrubs of Burma". He retired from the Indian Forest Service in 1930 and served as a member of the Forestry Commission in Great Britain during 1932-39 and acted as external examiner in forestry at the University of Edinburgh during 1931-35.

Rodger will be long remembered in Burma, as he did great work for the forests of that country; he will be equally well remembered at the Forest Institute at Dehra Dun, where his enthusiasm was an inspiration to all those who worked there with him and under him.

E. P. STEBBING

### Commander Vernon Edwards

VERNON EDWARDS died suddenly on September 22 at the age of fifty-nine. He was educated at Weymouth College, where he distinguished himself at athletics, particularly at Rugby football, and, coming from an old naval family, was himself intended for the Navy. However, he did not enter the Service until 1914, when he was gazetted a paymaster sub-lieutenant R.N.R. and served with the Sixth Light Cruiser Squadron throughout the First World War in the North Sea and Mediterranean, and afterwards in the Baltic. On demobilization Edwards found some difficulty in settling down in civilian life, and among other things he tried farming.

By a fortunate chance, while staying with relatives in Sussex, he met the late Dr. F. A. Bather, then keeper of geology in the British Museum (Natural History), who was much taken by the coloured toys, mostly animals, which Edwards made in his spare time. Bather at this time had a scheme for making 'cut-out' restorations of extinct animals, mostly dinosaurs, for distribution to local museums, and Edwards was asked to carry out the work. The scheme was not a very successful one from Dr. Bather's point of view, but it started Edwards on his career. From cut-outs of other people's restorations he quickly passed to original models of his own, and in these he was extremely successful for, although almost entirely self-taught both in art and anatomy, he had the remarkable gift of making 'dry bones live', at the same time taking the utmost pains to ensure accuracy. The first models were mostly of dinosaurs and Tertiary mammals; but in 1931 he was asked to make a series of dioramas for the fossil fish gallery in the British Museum (Natural History). There were eight of these and they were most effective. Thereafter dioramas and restoration-scenes became his chief work, while at the same time he extended his field to include historical subjects. Apart from the large series of his paleontological works in the British Museum (Natural History) and the historical dioramas in the Tottenham Museum, examples of Edwards's work have been acquired by museums all over the world. Recalled to the Navy in 1939, he served throughout the Second World War as Commander (S.) at sea in the North Sea and Mediterranean, and afterward, ashore in Ceylon, Mauritius and East Africa; but the heavy work put a great strain on him, and although he continued his modelling after the War he suffered from increasing ill-health.

Edwards was a cheerful, generous, kindly man, without a trace of malice in his make-up, and he will be greatly missed by his friends in scientific and other circles. He is survived by his wife and a married daughter.

E. I. W.