

HOMER COLLAR SKEELS

HOMER COLLAR SKEELS, botanist in the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., died on January 3 at East St. Louis, Illinois.

In 1895 Mr. Skeels entered the Michigan Agricultural College, specializing in botany, and graduated in 1898 with the degree of bachelor of science. Mr. Skeels entered the Bureau of Plant Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture in November, 1907, and at the time of his death was a botanist in the Division of Foreign Plant Introduction of that bureau.

During the years spent in the service of the Depart-

ment of Agriculture, Mr. Skeels built up what may be rightly considered the largest and most complete collection of economic foreign seeds in the United States, if not in the world. This now includes nearly 45,000 samples. As a result of his work, Mr. Skeels had acquired a nation-wide reputation as an expert in the identification of seeds.

He was a member of the Botanical Society of America, the Botanical Society of Washington, the Biological Society of Washington, the Washington Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

P. R.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

GIFTS TO THE BRITISH NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

ACCORDING to the London *Times* the trustees of the Rowland Ward Bequest have presented to the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, three mounted specimens: the head of a female Bighorn sheep from North America, a rare yellow-handed Titi monkey from Brazil and a black-headed Uakari monkey from the Amazons. A collection of mammals, mostly large ungulates, shot by Major P. H. G. Powell-Cotton in north East Africa, has been presented by him to the museum, among them a Sudani giant eland; with the skins are complete skeletons.

The late Mr. C. C. Lacaita, who presented to the museum during his lifetime his monocotyledons and Sikkim plants, has bequeathed to the department of botany the remainder of his collection, some 40,000 sheets, mainly from Italy and Spain, but also collected from Greece, Styria and France. The richness in critical Italian plants is the more appreciated since the museum herbarium was poor in Italian material. Mr. Lacaita's cabinets accompany the herbarium as the gift of his daughter, Mrs. Windsor Clive. Colonel A. H. Wolley Dod has presented his collection of British brambles, containing over 1,000 specimens, largely from Cheshire. Some 900 plants from the Cambridge Expedition to British Guiana have been received through Dr. G. C. Carter, the leader of the expedition, and T. G. Tutin, its botanist.

Among additions to the department of geology are a slab, 8 feet high, containing a reconstructed group of palm-leaves from the Tertiary beds of Italy (the gift of Lord Rothschild), and a small assemblage of British fossil vertebrates, including Eocene mammal and bird remains from the Isle of Wight and Liassic reptiles from Dorset and Yorkshire; these have been collected and presented by Mr. S. L. Wood. Gifts to the department of minerals include crystallized sprays of native gold from the City Deep Mine, Witwaters-

rand (from the Central Mining and Investment Corporation) and tektites, resembling the Australian "Black Men's Buttons," from Billiton, in the Dutch East Indies, presented by Engineer R. J. van Lier. A Chinese carving in fluorspar has been purchased as an example of the working of this material. A large series of rocks and minerals has been collected for the department by Mr. W. Campbell Smith in the United States and in Canada. Material was also selected by him from the duplicates of the U. S. National Museum and the U. S. Geological Survey.

THE GEOGRAPHIC PLAYERS, INC.

A GEOGRAPHIC theater has been organized in New York City by a group of geographers, explorers and scientific men. Members of the new theater have formed the Geographic Players, Inc., and will present programs combining motion pictures, lantern slides, lectures and native music and dancing.

The aims of the new theater, according to Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews, one of the organizers, as reported in *The New York Times*, are:

To establish a legitimate theater with stage and screen where the world's geographers, explorers and scientists may present their experiences and records in a popular way.

To foster through the spoken word and pictures appreciation for reality and natural beauty, which has been developed by scientific researchers who work with camera, microscope and telescope, whether under sea, on the earth or in the air.

And to present this knowledge of the truth of life and the customs of the different peoples who live in the world, so that it may become of educational and inspirational value to the public.

The Geographic Players will present all their programs for the time being at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Carveth Wells, the explorer, will be master of ceremonies.