

Dr. Krasser published several papers on Upper Triassic floras, and it was hoped that he would eventually produce an adequately illustrated account of this important but still very imperfectly known period of botanical history. It would be a fitting recognition of the value of Dr. Krasser's work if the authorities of the Vienna Museum could see their way to entrust the material to which he was devoting his vacations to some palæo-botanical colleague with a view to the publication of a comprehensive memoir. Among other contributions reference may be made to papers on the genus *Williamsonia* and other Jurassic plants from Sardinia.

Dr. Krasser was a man of attractive personality, a good friend, and an enthusiastic investigator.

PROF. RHYS DAVIDS.

By the death on December 27, in the fulness of years and honour, of Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids, England has lost a great oriental scholar. Son of a Congregational pastor at Colchester, and born on May 12, 1843, Prof. Davids was educated at Brighton School, and studied Greek and Sanskrit at Breslau University. He spent eight years in the Ceylon Civil Service, where he

mastered Pali and commenced his Buddhistic studies. Returning home he became, from 1882 to 1912, professor of Pali and Buddhist literature at University College, London, and from 1904 to 1915 professor of comparative religion at the University of Manchester. He was secretary and librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1885 to 1904, and he shared in the foundation of the British Academy, of which he was a fellow.

Prof. and Mrs. Rhys Davids—the latter also an accomplished Pali scholar—were the leading agents in spreading a knowledge of Buddhism in this country. An inspiring teacher and an indefatigable worker, he produced a number of books on the subject which he had made his own; the best known of which are his manual of "Buddhism," "Buddhist India," and "American Lectures on Buddhism." He also did good work in establishing the Oriental Translations Fund and the Indian Text Series. His death leaves a gap in the scanty ranks of oriental scholars which will not be easily filled.

WE regret to announce the death on December 30, in his sixty-sixth year, of Dr. J. B. Haycraft, emeritus professor of physiology in the University of Wales.

Current Topics and Events.

SCIENTIFIC workers are too well acquainted with the value placed on their services to be surprised at an advertisement for a university assistant lecturer in a department of science at a salary of 300*l.* a year. Recently, however, such an offer provoked an indignant protest from a disinterested member of the general public, who stated to us that the remuneration of his chauffeur was on a more liberal scale. While it is true that any educated man with aspirations would prefer a university teaching post, with its vague promise of an interesting and useful career, to the more mundane occupation, it is nevertheless a matter of the gravest concern that those educational institutions which are engaged in the task of increasing and disseminating knowledge are in such a parlous financial position that they are forced to offer salaries bearing no relation to the status of the posts, and imposing on their holders an unfair burden of financial sacrifice. The greatest benefactors of the universities are still the members of the teaching staffs themselves.

THE story of Shackleton's last Antarctic expedition on the *Quest*, as presented at the New Scala Theatre, is a little disappointing, inasmuch as considerable interesting material is not explained. It is a difficult task for Commander Frank Wild to supply anything more than a running commentary with so much film shown. The curtailment of some of the "Departure" film and "Ports of Call" film, such as a bull fight in Portugal, all of which occupy considerable time, would, perhaps, be advantageous, and the audience taken as quickly as possible to the lonely sub-Antarctic islands with their fascinating bird life—to South Georgia and its whaling industry, and to the southern ice fields. A few still pictures introduced here and there would afford the lecturer

an opportunity of giving more information, which is badly needed, of the natural history pictures. The natural history films are extraordinarily interesting, and commence with a landing through the heavy surf on St. Paul's Rocks on the equator. In the midst of these small dangerous rocks there is a lagoon of wonderfully clear water, with many species of fish to be seen in its pellucid depths. The rocks provide a nesting place for hundreds of sea birds. Excellent films are shown of the rookeries of the great wanderer Albatross, the Cape hen, the giant petrel, the Gentoo penguin, and the sea elephant, all taken at South Georgia. Ascension Island provides a moving picture of a great rookery of terns. The lengthy film of the whaling industry in South Georgia is shown with the film running at high speed, commencing with the harpooning of the rorqual, or blue whale, and showing the whole process of "trying out." This film is full of interest and instruction, but, unhappily, bears eloquent testimony to the extermination of southern whales. Soon these rorquals and fin-back whales will become as scarce as the sperm and southern whalebone whale, if the industry is allowed to continue uncontrolled. Zavodovski Island, to the south of South Georgia, was next visited. This ice-covered, rock-bound, and forbidding island is the home of countless penguins. Round its coast are numbers of deep caves which belch forth dense sulphurous fumes. The three months spent in the ice pack with constant vigilance and toil in battling the floes, are not of special interest from a lecture point of view, though no doubt useful scientific data was collected.

THE duration record in gliding established at the recent contests on the South Downs has already been broken in a rather sensational manner, and by another