

experience and sympathy for the younger workers made him a particularly valuable member of many research committees.

Douglas's contributions to medical research must not be estimated merely by the publications under his name, significant though these are, but also by the great influence he exerted on the work of others; and only those who had the privilege of working with him or under his guidance can know how great this influence was, just as only those few could realise his great unselfishness and innate kindness.

Douglas was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1922 and of the Royal College of Physicians in 1933. He was an ardent field naturalist, particularly interested in birds; he wrote two papers on the migration of woodcock, and presented bird skins which he had collected to the British Museum (Natural History).

P. P. L.

Prof. A. S. Hitchcock

By the death of Prof. A. S. Hitchcock on December 16 at the age of seventy years, the United States has lost one of its most distinguished botanists and the world its foremost agrostologist. He died on board the liner *City of Norfolk*, in which he was returning to the United States after visiting various European herbaria and attending the International Botanical Congress at Amsterdam.

Albert Spear Hitchcock was born at Owosso, Michigan, on September 4, 1865. He received his education at the Iowa State Agricultural College where he took his B.S.A. degree in 1884, and his M.S. and Sc.D. degrees in 1886 and 1920 respectively. From 1885 until 1887, he was first assistant chemist and later instructor at the above college. Then followed a short period as botanical assistant at the Missouri Botanic Garden, while in 1892-1901 he was professor of botany at the Kansas State Agricultural College. In 1901, he joined the staff of the United States Department of Agriculture as assistant agrostologist, becoming systematic agrostologist in 1905 and at the same time custodian of the Section of Grasses in the United States National Herbarium. Since 1924, he has been the principal botanist of the Bureau of Plant Industry, in charge of systematic agrostology.

Hitchcock's botanical work may be conveniently divided into two phases. The first was mainly occupied with teaching, but during that period he published a number of papers on the plants of Kansas, Iowa and Florida, and as a result of his trip to the West Indies (1890-91), an account of the plants collected in the Bahamas, Jamaica and Grand Cayman. The second phase, commencing with his appointment as agrostologist at Washington, was one of specialisation. At the National Herbarium there, he built up with the assistance of his colleague, Mrs. Chase, a large grass herbarium estimated to contain more than 210,000 sheets of specimens, and a very fine private agrostological library. His publications on the Gramineæ are exceedingly numerous and form a most valuable series of contributions to our knowledge

of that very important family. They range from short papers containing descriptions of new species to complete grass floras of such regions as Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, Central America, West Indies (with A. Chase), Hawaiian Islands, etc. For his own country, he produced in 1920 an account of the "Genera of the Grasses of the United States", and in 1935, a "Manual of the Grasses of the United States"—the latter a monumental work containing descriptions and illustrations of about 1,100 species. He also continued the account of the Gramineæ in the North American flora. Two other works which deserve special mention are his "Text-Book of Grasses" (1914) and "Methods of Descriptive Systematic Botany" (1925). It is understood that a new edition of his "Genera of Grasses of the United States" is in the press, and that a revised account of the "Grasses of the West Indies" has been prepared.

Prof. Hitchcock travelled extensively to study and collect grasses in many parts of the world. In addition to visiting all the American States, he made expeditions from 1906 onwards to Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, West Indies, Hawaii, British Guiana, Japan, China, Indo-China, the Philippines, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. In the summer of 1929 he was invited to attend the combined meetings of the British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science in South Africa, when he gave a paper on the "Relation of Grasses to Man". This trip enabled him to make numerous gatherings of grasses in South Africa, and on the return journey, in Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika Territory, Kenya Colony and Uganda. At one time or another he had visited all the more important herbaria of Europe for the purpose of examining the type-specimens of American species described by European authors.

Prof. Hitchcock took a great interest in the thorny subject of botanical nomenclature, and acted as chairman of the Committee on Generic Types and the Standing Committee on Botanical Nomenclature appointed by the Botanical Society of America. In this capacity he took a leading part in preparing the "Regulations for Fixing Generic Types" (*Science*, n.s. 49, 333-336 (1919)) and the "Type-basis Code of Botanical Nomenclature" (*Science*, n.s. 53, 312-314 (1921)) issued on behalf of the Society. During the period 1923-30 he worked in conjunction with certain British botanists in an attempt to reconcile the conflicting views then held on nomenclature—an attempt crowned with success at the Fifth International Botanical Congress held at Cambridge in 1930. He also took part in the nomenclatural discussions at the Sixth International Botanical Congress, Amsterdam, 1935. His "Methods of Descriptive Systematic Botany" forms a useful introduction to nomenclature as well as to taxonomic methods.

We deeply regret the passing of so kind and able a colleague—one who had accomplished so much, and who for the future had made ambitious plans whereby his vast knowledge of the Gramineæ was to be utilised in preparing, with the collaboration of Mrs. Chase, a classification and a descriptive account of the genera of the world's grasses.