

## News and Views

## Dr. E. D. Merrill

THE Linnean Medal of the Linnean Society of London was presented to Dr. E. D. Merrill through a representative of the American Embassy on May 24. When in 1900 the new administration of the Philippines established a scientific service, Elmer Drew Merrill, then fresh from college, was one of those appointed. The botanical position there had been rendered difficult because of two fires; one in 1897 had destroyed the herbarium of the Forestry Bureau, Manila, and the other had destroyed the herbarium of the Guadalupe Convent during the Spanish-American War of 1899. Thus in the space of two years the work of Vidal and of the priests who had followed Blanco was largely obliterated. The problem facing young Merrill was one which would have daunted many much more experienced taxonomists, but he faced it with characteristic energy and common sense. To know what the older explorers had found and described necessitated visiting the same areas and making large collections. Thus not only did he collect in all parts of the Philippines as they became accessible, but also the extensive herbarium he built up contained specimens from all adjoining areas. His first administrative post was that of Director of the Bureau of Science, Philippine Islands, to which he was appointed in 1919. He rounded off his botanical work for the islands by the publication of "An Enumeration of Philippine Flowering Plants" (1925-26) in four volumes.

IN his intensive studies of the Philippine flora, Dr. Merrill did not confine his attentions to Philippine plants but investigated also the neighbouring Indo-Malayan floras. Borneo, Amboina (where Rumphius had worked in pre-Linnean times), and Indo-China (where Loureiro had botanized) all received his attention. His "Bibliographic Enumeration of Bornean Plants" appeared in 1921, and at intervals between 1917 and 1935 he published his invaluable interpretations of the species of the earlier Asiatic botanists whose specimens, from one cause or another, had largely disappeared. In 1917 came his "Interpretation of Rumphius's Herbarium Amboinense", in the following year his "Species Blancoanæ", in 1921 his "Review of the New Species of Plants Proposed by N. L. Burman in his Flora Indica", and in 1935 his commentary on Loureiro's "Flora Cochinchinensis". Since leaving the Philippines Merrill has filled arduous administrative posts, first as dean of the Faculty of Agriculture in the University of California, then as director of the New York Botanic Garden and now, as administrator of botanical collections of Harvard University. In all these he has worked with the same energy and success. At the same time he has contrived to do what many holders of high administrative posts find impossible: to continue his old scientific work. During this latter period he has turned his attention chiefly to the botany of south-eastern China, and in

collaboration with the enthusiastic young Chinese botanists has published numerous contributions on the flora of the region; and only a year ago he published, with E. H. Walker, a comprehensive "Bibliography of Eastern Asiatic Botany", of more than seven hundred pages.

## Rev. E. O. James

THE Rev. Ernest Oliver James, professor of the history and philosophy of religion in the University of Leeds since 1933, has been appointed Wilde reader in natural and comparative religion in the University of Oxford for a period of three years as from October 1 next. Dr. James is well known for his studies in comparative religion in the school of Robertson Smith and Sir James Frazer. He was president of the Folk-lore Society in 1930-32, has edited *Folk-Lore* since 1932, and presided over the section of religions in the International Congress of Ethnological Sciences which met in London in 1934. In 1916-20 Dr. James acted as a secretary of the Anthropological Section of the British Association, and in 1928 was an extra-mural tutor in anthropology in the University of Cambridge. From 1911 until his appointment to a professorial chair, Dr. James was engaged in pastoral work in the Church, among the parishes of which he was incumbent being Limehouse in the East End of London, where between 1917 and 1921 his activities in eradicating the gross abuses prevalent among the Chinese population attracted no little public notice. He is the author of a considerable number of works on anthropological topics, among which may be mentioned "Primitive Ritual and Belief" (1917), "An Introduction to Anthropology" (1919), "The Stone Age" (1927), "The Origins of Sacrifice" (1933), "Christian Myth and Ritual" (1933), "The Old Testament in the Light of Anthropology" (1935) and "Introduction to the History of Religions" (1938).

## U.S. National Academy of Sciences: Medal Awards

THE following medals of the National Academy of Sciences were presented at the annual dinner of the Academy on April 25: *Agassiz Medal*, for oceanography, awarded to Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography of the University of California, La Jolla, for his personal oceanographic explorations in Arctic regions and his numerous contributions to physical oceanography and the interrelations between the sea and the atmosphere; *Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal* for 1933, and accompanying honorarium of 200 dollars, awarded to Richard Swann Lull, of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, in recognition of his work entitled: "A Revision of the Ceratopsia or Horned Dinosaurs", published in the *Memoirs* of the Peabody Museum of Natural History; *Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal* for 1934, and accompanying honorarium of 200 dollars, awarded to Theophilus Shickel Painter, of the University of Texas, in recognition of his work