THREE LARGE COLLECTIONS OF REPTILES RECEIVED

A collection of more than 1,500 specimens of lizards of the genus *Sceloporus* has been received in the Department of Zoology from Dr. Hobart M. Smith, Fellow of the National Research Council. This acquisition results from an arrangement whereby Field Museum Press will publish Dr. Smith's monographic revision of the lizards of this genus in the Zoological Series of the publications of this institution. The Museum accession comprises about one-half of the collection upon which Dr. Smith's research is primarily based, and includes nine type specimens and 125 paratypes.

The lizards in question form a North American group in which active evolution of species and subspecies seems to be in progress. The genus has consequently offered problems of especial difficulty to the taxonomist. Dr. Smith's successful treatment of these problems rests on one hand on an exceptionally comprehensive and detailed examination of all known specimens in American museums, and on the other is due to his extensive field studies during four successive expeditions to Mexico, which have carried him into nearly every state of that country. Dr. Smith is now in Mexico for renewed studies of reptiles and amphibians under a grant of the Walter Rathbone Bacon Scholarship of the Smithsonian Institution.

The interest of Field Museum's Division of Reptiles in Mexican problems is still further stimulated by the receipt of several hundred specimens of reptiles from Mr. Ernest G. Marsh, Jr., of the University of Texas, who is conducting a survey of the vertebrate animals of the state of Coahuila. His collection has been deposited in the Museum for determination and study, a share of it to remain permanently in the reference collection here.

A third considerable addition to the Museum's reference collections of reptiles and amphibians from Mexico resulted from the recent purchase of more than 600 specimens collected by Mr. Harry Hoogstraal, a student at the University of Illinois. His specimens come from Cerro Potosi, in Nuevo Leon, a high point in the eastern escarpment of the Mexican Plateau, about midway between the United States border and the high mountains near Mexico City. They afford important new information on distribution of Mexican forms. —K. P. S.

Ornamental Copper Ore

Some varieties of copper ore are of such a beautiful blue or green color that the more perfect pieces are often used as ornamental stones and carved in the shape of vases, ink wells, table tops, and other articles. A special case in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37) is devoted to a display of specimens of these types of ore, as they appear when first brought from the mine except for small polished sections showing their adaptability to ornamental uses. Most popular is green malachite, which is a basic carbonate of copper. Another basic carbonate is azurite, characterized by its rich blue color. Azurite is used less for carving because it is more difficult to obtain suitable pieces. The green silicate of copper, chrysocolla, is also used for ornamental purposes although not so frequently as malachite. The exhibit includes also a basic sulphate of copper known as brochantite, which is shown as an example of copper ores which are highly attractive in color but unfortunately are not durable enough for such use.

MUSEUM GUARDS' UNIFORMS ARE NOTABLY IMPROVED

Comfort, coolness, and a better appearance are emphasized in the new uniforms currently being worn by the guards at Field Museum. The high military collar, which was a feature of every uniform worn since the founding of the Museum, has been discarded in favor of the open lapel collar.

The New and the Old

Captain E. S. Abbey of the Museum guards, on the left, in the new blue uniform with gold braid, and white summer cap; and Sergeant David Conwill in the uniform which has been used for many years past.

The color has been changed from the severe military olive drab to blues of harmonizing shades for coat and trousers. Gold buttons and gold braid complete the ensemble. The cap for summer wear is topped in white.

Crystal balls, and carvings of rock crystal, some of them interesting from a historical standpoint, are included in the gem room (H. N. Higinbotham Hall—Hall 31).

6,000 INVERTEBRATE SPECIMENS COLLECTED IN FLORIDA

The Field Museum expedition which has been collecting marine animals and other invertebrates along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of Florida since early in May, has completed its work. Dr. Fritz Haas, Curator of Lower Invertebrates, and Staff Taxidermist Leon L. Walters, who conducted the expedition, have returned to the Museum. More than 6,000 specimens, representing the most important features of the invertebrate life forms native to the region, were collected. On Sanibel Island, Dr. Haas conducted notable researches on the relationships between the various types of fauna and the environmental conditions in which they are found. He also investigated the role of molluscan life in building up land through the accumulation of shells.

One of the main objectives of the expedition was the collecting of material and data for a proposed habitat exhibit of the loggerhead turtle. This material was collected on Sanibel Island, and plaster molds were made which will form the basis for lifelike reproductions. Mr. Walters was fortunate in being able to observe the entire nesting procedure—the turtle leaving the water, digging the hole, laying its eggs, and covering them with sand. The entire process required only fifty-five minutes.

The expedition was extended the utmost co-operation by the Bass Biological Laboratories of Englewood, Florida, and by other agencies and individuals as well.

Food from Orchid Tubers

Salep is a farinaceous meal obtained from the tubers of several terrestrial orchids, of European and Asiatic species. The meal is separated by macerating the bulbs in water. It contains a substance called *bassorine*, which is said to contain more nutritive matter than any other vegetable product, one ounce per diem being sufficient to sustain a man. Large quantities of salep are prepared in Macedonia and Greece, but the finest comes from Turkey. In the Himalaya and Cashmere many species of bulbous-rooted orchids yield salep, which is used as food by the natives.