

donts are nowhere known outside the continent of North America. They were distinctly a "stay-at-home" family. At the same time they became so numerous and so abundant on this continent that in certain rock formations, such as the Bad Lands of the Dakotas and neighboring states, the fossil skulls and skeletons of these animals are common objects. Sometimes their skeletons are found in groups of four or five lying close together and apparently overcome and covered up by a sandstorm or other natural calamity. Again, single specimens may be found in a locality. Only one mounted skeleton could be shown in this exhibit although a number of other entire skeletons are preserved in the study collections of the Museum.

The specimens belonging to this family are exhibited in four vertical columns, each column being made up of the individuals of a single geological epoch. A restoration in color, a copy of the work of a well-known animal artist, shows a species of these animals in its native surroundings. Such illustrations not only give a vivid picture of the animals as they appeared in life, but add a touch of color to the group and enliven the whole exhibit.

THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

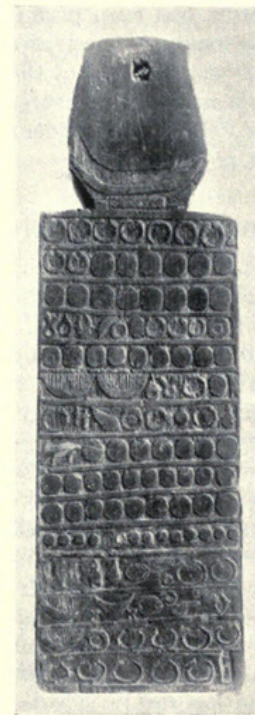
Brides on the Installment Plan

Brides are purchased on the installment plan in the Kei group of islands in the Netherlands East Indies. A memorandum representing a contract for the purchase of a bride, carved on a wooden paddle, is exhibited in the Hall of Malaysia (Hall G, Case 53) at Field Museum. From the number of payments specified it is apparent that credit in Kei is more liberal than the present eighteen-months limit on installment sales of certain products in the United States. Furthermore, the gold standard has apparently not been abandoned there, as it is specified that many of the payments shall be made in the precious metal. There is no indication as to what happens when a bridegroom fails to make payments on time—whether or not the father of the girl can then repossess her as the furniture, radio and automobile installment men repossess their chattels here.

The price of a bride among the upper class of Kei natives may amount to five hundred dollars or more. Her father keeps an account of the periodical payments by cutting a record on the face of a board, such as that displayed at the Museum, of the number and kind of objects received in payment. When payments are completed, the board is given to the bridegroom as a receipt.

The Museum's account board has twelve carved lines, each representing a series of payments. First there are nine incomplete rings representing gold bracelets, then four-

teen "rix-dollars" (silver coins introduced into the islands by the Dutch, with a normal value approximately equivalent to \$1.20 in United States money). Other lines are



BRIDAL CONTRACT

carved notations of the payment of several kinds of gold ornaments, gongs, and more dollars. One line of payments includes a pig, followed by more gold objects and more money. The records of similar payments continue on the reverse side of the board.

The Kei Islands are a small group lying south of western New Guinea. The original inhabitants were apparently quite similar to the Papuans. In the seventeenth century a large portion of the inhabitants

of the Banda Islands nearby were forced to move to the Kei group. Later, natives from other Malayan islands also settled in the islands. The population now is partly pagan, partly Moslem, and partly Christian.

SPRING FLOWERS IN BLOOM AT THANKSGIVING

BY JULIAN A. STEYERMARK
ASSISTANT CURATOR OF THE HERBARIUM

Ordinarily we sit down to dinner at Thanksgiving with cold winter blasts reminding us of the winter season to come. Outside of chrysanthemums and late garden stragglers we are not blessed with a multitude of flowers to beautify the landscape.

This November, however, and well through Thanksgiving week, so many plants that ordinarily are only spring flowers came into bloom that it seems worth-while to record them. Most Chicagoans will agree that October and November weather this year left much to be desired. Most of the days were either rainy, cold, or snowy, and at first thought would not seem conducive to plant life. Nevertheless, the abundance of rain plus the moderately cool weather somewhat simulated conditions which exist generally in the first days of spring, minus however, the sunshine of springtime.

Despite the lack of sunshine in October and November, pear trees were found flowering in October. Lilacs and a few other spring-flowering shrubs were recorded in bloom. Pitcher plants flowered again in October and November, and also rue

anemone, wild blue violets, bird-foot violet, and several other species. Finally, the round-lobed hepatica (*Hepatica americana*), which ordinarily is one of the first of the spring wild flowers in the Chicago region, blossomed again in October, and in the woods around Barrington, at least, sent up two lavender flowers during Thanksgiving.

Mayas, Aztecs, and Toltecs

Because of their great intellectual achievements, their artistic skill, and their city-state organization, the Mayas have been called "the Greeks of the New World." The Aztecs, with their powers of political and military organization, their vast empire, and their borrowed arts and sciences, have similarly been compared to the ancient Romans. Collections representing these two cultures, as well as that of the Toltecs who preceded the Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico, are on exhibition in Hall 8 of the Department of Anthropology.

Ancient Corroded Metal Studied

A party of metallurgists from the Sun Oil Company recently visited the Museum to study the effects of centuries of corrosion on buried metals collected in Kish and Egypt. They were much interested in the Fink electrolytic treatment for restoring corroded metal. This method has been employed in Field Museum laboratories to restore hundreds of valuable specimens.

FIELD MUSEUM HONOR ROLL

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Steyermark, Julian A. 1941. "Spring Flowers in Bloom at Thanksgiving." *Field Museum news* 12(12), 5-5.

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