

OBITUARY.

THE LATE W. L. SCLATER. W. L. Sclater, who was killed by a flying bomb in July, 1944, was a more remarkable man than some of us had realized, for to an enviable extent, he had defied time. When I saw him last, in 1939, he was the same courteous, interested, companionable, hard-working person as he had been ten years earlier, and no one would have guessed—I certainly did not—that he was getting on for eighty years old.

His connection with Africa, and in particular with African ornithology, lasted for most of his long life. In 1896, he became Director of the South African Museum at Cape Town, where he wrote most of what had been Stark's "Birds of South Africa." At the beginning of this century he returned to England, with his wife by way of Mombasa and the Nile route; and I remember them giving me their impressions of that grilling walk from Nimule to Rejaf.

From 1909 until his death Sclater worked at the British Museum, specializing for many years on African birds. Anyone who had interest in this group inevitably turned to Sclater for help, either by letter, or personally, when they were in London. He was one of those men who have many offices and many interests, but are always able to give time and a welcome.

He performed a most valuable service when he compiled the "Systema Avium Aethiopicarum" (1924-1930), a work that has provided a basis for so much that has been done since. Later, on the death of Sir Frederick Jackson, he was asked to complete the unfinished "Birds of Kenya Colony and the Uganda Protectorate," by which he will be most generally known in East Africa. In his unobtrusive way he contributed a great deal to this book as he had to Stark's. He was very conscious of the wide gaps in the information at his disposal. A great many of them still exist, but some could, he knew, have been filled if he had had a free hand in obtaining collaboration.

It is characteristic of him that in his last years, when the British Museum had more need of workers on South American than on African birds, he turned with zest to a field with which his first paper had dealt over fifty years before. Through the war he continued his work at South Kensington, which was essentially voluntary, unintimidated and without intermission.

R.E.M.

THE LATE VENERABLE W. E. OWEN, ARCHDEACON OF NYANZA PROVINCE, KENYA. The Venerable Archdeacon W. E. Owen, who passed away at Limuru on the 22nd September, 1945, has been a keen member of the East Africa Natural History Society for many years, and his death leaves a big gap in the ranks of the field naturalists of Kenya.

Although Archdeacon Owen was best known to the public in Kenya for his bold and outspoken defence of native rights, he will long be remembered both in Africa and in Europe for his contributions to the study of the archæology and

palaeontology of Kenya. His work on the Tumbian culture, published in conjunction with Dr. Leakey in 1945, added a very important chapter to the story of Kenya's past, a chapter which could never have been written but for Archdeacon Owen's important discoveries. At the time of his death, he had just passed the typed proofs of another important contribution to pre-historic study, a paper on the hitherto unrecorded dimple-based pottery of Nyanza Province.

In the field of palaeontology, Owen was responsible for some remarkable discoveries of Miocene fossils at Ombo and at Kiboko Island, and his collection from these areas is in England. His generous gifts of specimens have enriched many Museums, including the principal Museums in England and South Africa, as well as the Coryndon Museum, Nairobi, to which he gave the greater part of his best material.

To his widow and his three sons, the Society extends the deepest sympathy.

L.S.B.L.
