



STAR OF EVIL

In the desert, where the struggle to get growth is severe and where there are always hungry and thirsty animal mouths to cut down in a moment what took months to build, plants must needs put on a forbidding and even sinister aspect. This curse of the sun shows itself even in objects of beauty, like the flower of the *Stapelia* here shown. For all its attractive form, the flower has an almost reptilian texture and coloring, and its odor is so overpoweringly ill that it gives many persons a headache just to smell it. Photo by Cornelia Clarke.

in astronomy in school. Perhaps I inherited my interest in the stars from my father. I am head foreman for one of Sears Brothers, Inc., ranches near Brawley Calif., which grow vegetables and melons.

If this discovery does anything for the good of astronomy, nothing will please me more.

*Science News Letter, August 1, 1931*

## ZOOLOGY

## Oysters Open Up When Weather Warms

OYSTERS OPEN UP when the water over their beds grows warmer, and they shut up when it gets cooler, A. E. Hopkins of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries has discovered. It was previously thought that oysters opened by day and closed at night because of light changes, but Mr. Nelson's experiments indicate that it is the daily changes in water temperature rather than the daily light changes that affect the behavior of the shellfish. The experiments were performed on the oyster of the Pacific coast.

*Science News Letter, August 1, 1931*

## ETHNOLOGY

# Vile Indian Brew Believed Linked With Schmerler Murder

The body of Henrietta Schmerler, 23-year-old student of anthropology, was found July 24 in a ravine on the White River Apache Indian reservation. The fact that Miss Schmerler was working among Apache Indians to obtain material for a post-graduate thesis attracted nation-wide attention to the "hazards" of studying Indians at first-hand. Scientists point out that it is not unusual for women to do research among Indians and that the solution of the Apache mystery is to be sought in

special circumstances surrounding the case. "As a rule investigators are safer among Indians than in American cities," declared one anthropologist consulted. Science Service asked Arthur Woodward, who cooperated with Miss Schmerler in her work at the reservation, for information regarding her efforts to study the Apaches. Mr. Woodward has just returned to Los Angeles from an expedition into the part of Arizona where the Apache reservation is located.

By ARTHUR WOODWARD

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ACCORDING to statements made by Miss Henrietta Schmerler, 23-year-old student of Columbia University, a few days before her death on the Fort Apache Reservation, Ariz., where she was attempting to gather data on the little known ceremonial and tribal home life of the Apache Indians, her efforts were being balked on nearly every turn by the reluctance of the Indians to give this information.

Miss Schmerler also stated that she had left New York on three weeks notice and without having had time to inform herself sufficiently on the nature of the people among whom she was to work. It is believed by some of her white acquaintances who endeavored to aid Miss Schmerler in her work that this unpreparedness and her well meaning but unversed attempts at working among primitive peoples may have been one of the factors that indirectly led to her death.

At a devil dance held at the White River Agency on July 4 Miss Schmerler experienced considerable difficulties in obtaining desired information and photographs. Ben Wetherill, archaeologist of the Van Bergen-Los Angeles Museum expedition working on an archaeological survey in that region, proffered his aid to the young student, obtaining for her photographs of devil dancers which she desired and was unable to obtain herself. At that time she intimated her despair of being able to work into the graces of the people, but she appeared determined in her efforts to carry on her work which was

being done preparatory to the granting of her degree of Ph. D.

Judging from the latest press reports from White River, she was criminally attacked before she was murdered. This brings a new element into the case, that of a vicious sort of a home brew which it is alleged is manufactured in large quantities by some of the Indians. Into the crudely distilled alcoholic drink is placed a decoction made of the roots of the Nimson-weed, a particularly vile narcotic. This drink is said to incite partakers to a frenzy.

It is also alleged that these drinking orgies in the Apache camps take place on Saturday evenings and on Sundays. For that reason curiosity seekers are advised against making tours of the camps along White River at such times. It may be that Miss Schmerler in her ignorance of these drinking bouts attempted to go from her cabin to one of the camps Saturday night or Sunday morning and was either followed or waylaid, assaulted and murdered by some drunken Indian.

It is related that her body was discovered in a ravine near the old Fort Apache military cemetery which is situated on a small hill not far from a group of tepee shaped houses of one portion of the Apache camp which extends for several miles along the river. In this cemetery rest the remains of many United States troopers killed in the Apache wars half a century ago. Rock breastworks along the mountain trails still tell of the Apache ambushes while rusty rifles and mouldering bones found in the rocks speak of unknown troopers who failed to report for duty.

*Science News Letter, August 1, 1931*