

DEATH OF PROFESSOR MARSH.

Caused by Pneumonia After a Few Days' Illness—A Sketch of His Life and Works.

Othniel Charles Marsh, Yale '60, Professor of Paleontology in Yale University, died of pneumonia at his home on Prospect street, New Haven, at 10 o'clock Saturday morning, March 18. While attending to his regular duties in Peabody Museum on the previous Saturday he was taken with a sudden chill which seemed to be more severe than one of the ordinary kind. He called a carriage and was driven to his home, where, notwithstanding prompt attendance, pneumonia developed very rapidly with a fatal result. Scarcely any one outside of his immediate household and the attending physician knew of Prof. Marsh's serious illness, and the news of his death came as a great surprise and shock. He was unconscious at the end, and died without pain.

The name of Professor O. C. Marsh has been known on both sides of the Atlantic for over thirty-five years as one of the leaders of the world in his particular line of work. Not only was he one of the widest known Americans, but he was undoubtedly one of the greatest scientists Yale has yet produced. Just how great a man he was, and just what his influence has been and will be on Science and on scientific thought, cannot be appreciated because of the nearness of perspective. Time alone can give him his exact place and no one doubts that that place will be among the highest. The position he occupied may, in a measure, be judged inferentially by the honors he received from the scientific bodies in different parts of the world. Yale's debt to Prof. Marsh is incalculable, for, not only are the priceless and varied collections which mark Yale in Europe as well as in America, his gift, but the building which houses them came through him by the gift of his uncle, George Peabody. The single-hearted devotion of his life and fortune to purely intellectual aims and to the advancement of knowledge has made him a notable figure even among his fellows, for the last quarter of a century. His name, like those of Silliman and Dana, has added dignity to American science, and honor to Yale.

Besides contributing directly, by means of collections, a vast amount of material, Professor Marsh has furnished, indirectly, much matter for scientific thinkers and philosophical writers by the contributions he has made towards the problems of evolution. His publications on scientific subjects number about 300. In direct line of scientific work he will, of course, be known best for his discovery and description of many types of extinct vertebrates, especially of dinosaurian reptiles. Early in his career Charles Darwin wrote him: "Your work on these old birds and the many fossils and animals of North America has offered the best support to the theory of evolution that has appeared in the last twenty years."

Professor Marsh was a born collector and spent his life and his fortune in the work. Possessed of a resistless energy and unbounded perseverance, no dangers or privations were too great to deter him when pursuing his keen search for specimens. His first trip to the West, which was the greatest field of his labors, was in 1868, when he went out with the first party over the

newly constructed Union Pacific Railway. The road ended at Ogden, in Utah, and from there Prof. Marsh pursued his search aided only by a guide. He was rewarded by discovering, near Lake Como, the first bone of a dinosaurian which was found in the West, and which proved to be the clue to the enormous finds of the expeditions which followed. In the Summer of 1870 he planned and led the first expedition that was ever organized for the study of the Tertiary and Cretaceous faunas of that section of the West. The entire party numbered thirteen men, all Yale men, including Professor Marsh himself. Their names were: James W. Wadsworth, '67 S.; C. Wyllys Betts, '67; Eli Whitney, '69; George B. Grinnell, '70; John R. Nicholson, '70; John W. Griswold, '70; Charles McC. Reeve, '70; Alexander H. Ewing, '69; Henry B. Sargent, '71 S.; Henry D. Ziegler, '71 S.; Charles T. Ballard, '70 S., and James M. Russell, '70. The party left Fort McPherson, Neb., and pushed into the heart of the hostile Indian country under the escort of a company of the Fifth cavalry. It was on this expedition that some of the first rich finds known to the Science of Paleontology were made.

THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTION.

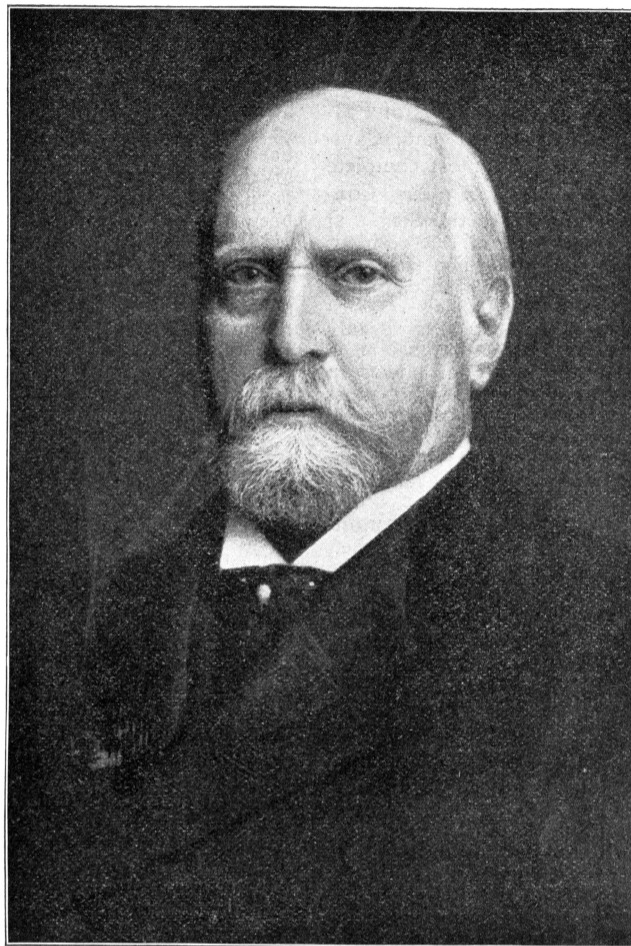
Since 1870 Professor Marsh has made about a dozen exploring trips in the West and has crossed the Rocky Mountains over a score of times, unearthing on each trip literally tons of material for the furtherance of science. The collections now on exhibition in Peabody Museum are but a fragment of all he has gathered. Some of the most rare and valuable specimens lie in the cellar and the attic of the Museum, awaiting the completion of the main wing of the building, which it was his desire to see built and holding his treasures at the time of Yale's Bi-centennial in 1901. In his letter to the Corporation on Jan. 13, 1898, announcing the gift of the collections to Yale University (published in the ALUMNI WEEKLY, Jan. 20, 1898), Prof. Marsh, speaking of the most important part of his gift, the collection of vertebrate fossils, said:

"This is the most important and valuable of all, as it is very extensive, contains a very large number of type specimens, many of them unique, and is widely known from the descriptions already published. In extinct Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles, of North America, this series stands pre-eminent.

"This collection was pronounced by Huxley, who examined it with care in 1876, to be surpassed by no other in the world. Darwin, in 1878, expressed a strong desire to visit America for the sole purpose of seeing this collection. Since then it has been more than doubled in size and value, and still holds first rank. The bulk of this collection has been secured in my western explorations, which have extended over a period of nearly thirty years."

In the same letter, Prof. Marsh described fully, under six separate heads, all of his main collections, and just where they were found. Besides the six main collections named, there were several others of less value, which include fossil plants, casts of fossils, geological specimens, and recent zoological material. These, also are deposited in the Peabody Museum, and are covered by the present deed of gift.

These collections represented the outlay of more than a quarter of a million dollars and upwards of thirty years of toil, during which period he served the University without a salary.



THE LATE PROF. OTHNIEL CHARLES MARSH.

[From a recent photograph.]

HIS LIFE.

Othniel Charles Marsh, son of Caleb Marsh and Mary Peabody, and nephew of George Peabody, the banker and philanthropist, was born at Lockport, N. Y., Oct. 29, 1831. He entered Yale in 1856 from Andover, where he had been the valedictorian of his Class, and after graduation from the Academic Department in 1860 studied two years in the Scientific School. Going abroad in 1862, he studied at the Universities of Heidelberg and Breslau till 1865, and on returning to America was appointed Professor of Paleontology in Yale University in 1866, the first chair of that kind ever established. He held this professorship until his death, a space of 33 years. As a student he began exploring expeditions, and it was the finding of a very important fossil in the coal regions of Nova Scotia, (*Eosaurus Acadianus*) which turned his attention from Mineralogy, which he had intended to make his life work, to Paleontology. He began his Western explorations in 1868 and at the time of his death had discovered altogether over 1,000 new fossil vertebrates and had classified and described about one-half of that number. He was honored by scientific societies all over the world and belonged to all those of note at home and abroad. Among the positions he held were these: President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1878; Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences 1878 to 1883; President of the National Academy of Sciences two terms from 1883 to 1896; Honorary Curator Vertebrate Paleontology in the National Museum, 1887; Foreign Member of the Geological

Society of London, 1898; Recipient of the Bigsby Medal from the Geological Society of London in 1877 and the Cuvier Prize from the Institute of France in 1897, both awards for the highest scientific research. He was a member of the Geological Society of Germany, Royal Irish Academy, Royal Bavarian Academy of Science and the Royal Academy of Denmark and Belgium. In 1897 he went to Russia, representing the United States Geological Survey at the International Geological Congress held in St. Petersburg in the Fall of that year, and before coming home visited all the important museums of Europe. His last trip across the ocean was last Summer, when he read two papers before the International Congress of Zoology at Cambridge, Eng., and two papers at the Bristol meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The last scientific meeting he attended was that of the National Academy of Sciences held at New Haven last November, and at that time he read four papers before the assemblage.

Besides the degrees he held from Yale, the University of Heidelberg gave him the honorary degree of Ph.D. in 1886 and Harvard conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. in the same year.

Prof. Marsh's nearest relatives are a half brother and a half sister, Mr. James P. Marsh of Chicago, and Mrs. Edward Walker of Batavia, N. Y. His private Secretary, Mr. Thomas Attwater Bostwick, who has served him faithfully and almost continuously since 1872, was in constant attendance on him in his short illness, and was with him when he died.

The burial will be from Battell Chapel at 2:30 Wednesday P. M. Interment will be in Grove Street Cemetery.