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ALEXANDER AGASSIZ: HIS LIFE AND SCIENTIFIC WORK¹

ALEXANDER AGASSIZ, our distinguished alumnus and my friend, died at sea in mid-ocean on board the S. S. *Adriatic* on Easter morning, March 27, 1910. When this information was received in England by wireless message, it was believed that some mistake had been made, for only a few days previously he had parted with scientific friends in London apparently in most excellent health. The sad news was too speedily confirmed. A few days later I had occasion to speak before an assemblage of scientific men and oceanographers, and I said his death was a great loss to American science, to the science of oceanography, and to all people who take an interest in the progress of natural knowledge. On this occasion I propose to show that this statement was fully justified, and that a truly great man passed from the world when Alexander Agassiz died.

Alexander Agassiz was the only son of the famous naturalist, Louis Agassiz, by his first wife, Cecile Braun, and was born at Neuchâtel in Switzerland on December 17, 1835. His school days were spent at his birthplace and at the Bürger School at Freiburg, in Baden, Germany, where his maternal uncle was a professor in the university, where his mother and sisters then resided, and where he also came under the influence of a great biologist, Professor Theo. von Siebold. Here were laid the foundations of an education in the French

¹ Memorial address delivered in Sanders Theater, Cambridge, Mass., March 22, 1911, at the request of the president and fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted from the Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College.