

FRANK SLATER DAGGETT

UNDER the directorship of Frank S. Daggett, the Museum of History, Science and Art of Los Angeles, has come to exert an important influence in science and education in Southern California. The collections representing the history of California and the southwest, and especially the splendid representation of the extinct life of California secured from the asphalt deposits of Rancho La Brea, have made the institution the object of frequent visits by large numbers of residents of California and by travellers from the east. The rapid development of the museum, the excellent organization of its collections, and the maintenance of a high standard of efficiency throughout the institution were in a very large measure due to the untiring effort of Mr. Daggett. Interesting and valuable exhibits representing living birds, mammals, and molluscs of Southern California were assembled under Mr. Daggett's direction, but by far the most important collection was that representing the extinct fauna secured in the extraordinary asphalt deposits at Rancho La Brea on the western border of the city.

Born at Norwalk, Ohio, in January 30, 1855, Mr. Daggett was for the greater part of his life engaged in commercial pursuits. He was a successful grain merchant at Duluth, Minnesota, from 1885 to 1894, and was a member of the Board of Trade of Chicago from 1904 to 1911. He was always deeply interested in natural history and from his early boyhood was engaged in the study of insects and birds.

His collection of Coleoptera numbered two thousand species and his bird collections contained over eight thousand specimens. Although he published little of a technical nature his interest in natural history subjects was a continued inspiration to many who were professionally engaged in scientific pursuits, and his influence in the advance of natural history of the Pacific Coast has been a factor of much importance.

Mr. Daggett became the director of the Museum of History, Science and Art in 1911. At the time of his assuming the office, the

building was finished, but contained no exhibits and no staff appointments had been made. Among the first tasks taken up was the securing of privileges for collecting in the Pleistocene deposits at Rancho La Brea. The excavations were carried on with the most extreme care and with all advice that could be obtained from those especially interested in the scientific study of the deposits. With the utmost precautions the great series of specimens unearthed was cleaned, prepared for study, and marked as to location in the beds. At no stage in the handling of this great collection was anything omitted which might have helped to make the material more useful to the student of future years. Along with its many other contributions to science the Rancho La Brea collection of the Museum of History, Science and Art must always remain as a monument to the scientific interest and administrative skill of Mr. Daggett.

It was the writer's privilege to make the acquaintance of Mr. Daggett at the time of his first interest in the deposits at Rancho La Brea, and to cooperate with him through the whole work of the excavation and preparation of these collections. In these years of close cooperation and friendship he proved himself a man of the highest ideals and finest purposes in development of all that is most fundamental and significant in the phases of natural science with which he came in contact. Although Mr. Daggett's name will not be known in future years by length of publication lists or by species described, there must be given to him a full measure for very significant constructive work done with much interest, with keen insight, and with an effectiveness which is rarely equalled.

JOHN C. MERRIAM

JOHN LOSSEN PRICER

JOHN LOSSEN PRICER,¹ of the Illinois State Normal University at Normal, Illinois, died suddenly of heart trouble on August 19, 1920. By his death the scientific interests of Illinois and other mid-western states have suffered a

¹ Born January 10, 1871. A.B. and A.M., University of Illinois, 1907.

very real loss. Professor Pricer had for years maintained an intimate and influential relationship to the problems involved in the teaching of the natural sciences in the secondary schools. His wholesome and extensive personal contact with science teachers and his untiring labor in the work of various educational organizations had brought him into prominence as one of the leaders in the program of reconstruction of the science curriculum of the secondary schools of the middle west. Unusual thoroughness of analysis, fairness of judgment, and whole-hearted sincerity had created for him a place in the esteem of his coworkers in natural science.

As secretary of the Illinois State Academy of Science for a period of four years, his service to that organization has been very marked. In this capacity as well as in his other relations he has done much to bring before the public the needs for more extensive education in science as a foundation for rational living and as an aid to the advancement of public health work.

The reception accorded his work upon the Life History of the Carpenter Ant² indicates his ability in original investigation. Teaching duties and a sense of personal obligation to devote his energies to teaching problems marked for him a course that lay chiefly through the educational field though he never lost interest in following the progress of current investigations.

H. J. VAN CLEAVE

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE ERUPTION OF KATLA IN ICELAND

THE volcano of Katla, situated some 50 kilometers southwest of Hekla, was in violent eruption in October, 1918, after remaining quiescent since the last previous eruption in 1860. A note by M. A. Lacroix in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Paris Academy of Sciences, abstracted in the *Geographical Journal*, gives some account of the eruption from data sent to him from Iceland. A little after noon on the 12th a slight earthquake shock was followed by the uprising above the

² *Biological Bulletin*, Vol. 14 (1908).

Mýrdalsjökull of an enormous column of incandescent ashes visible throughout the island for 200 to 300 kilometers. At Reykjavik a thick fall of ash darkened the whole sky, and a tidal wave was experienced on the coast south of the volcano. As is usual in Iceland, the paroxysm was accompanied by violent glacier outbursts. The first visitor to the crater after the eruption was M. Pall Sveinsson, whose notes have been placed at M. Lacroix's disposal. Katla lies in the east-southeast of the Mýrdalsjökull, one of the great ice-masses of southern Iceland, and on its southeast side extends the Mýrdalsandur, a great desert of sand formed of the material deposited during the glacial outbursts. In the northwest and southwest the Mýrdalsjökull is surmounted by two domes of ice rising to heights of 1,500 to 1,600 meters. Between them is a cup-shaped depression at the bottom of which the crater of Katla opens. Even the outer slopes of the ice-dome by which M. Sveinsson ascended were covered with ashes to a depth of half a meter, and those falling to the crater with half as much again. The rift of the crater, which measured from 500 to 800 by 40 meters, was free from ice, but water was flowing along it. No fumeroles nor products of sublimation were seen, only a yellowish-brown mud, the lighter portions of which seem derived by alteration from the darker, heavier ash. The glacier torrents had opened two deep ravines towards the south and east, and had done considerable damage, carrying with them huge masses of ice to a distance of 30 kilometers. The stony débris had formed a vast promontory on the coast similar to that formed in 1860. Like the thirteen previously recorded eruptions, that of 1918 was exclusively explosive, with no outpouring of lava—a fact more remarkable from the vicinity of Katla to the scene of the great fissure eruption of 1783. A chemical comparison of the ash of 1918 with the lava of 1783 will be of interest, for it is possible that the exclusive explosive character of the Katla eruptions may be due to the superimposition of the enormous ice-mass of the Mýrdalsjökull. A preliminary