

In Memoriam

PROFESSOR RAYMOND CARROLL OSBURN

1872-1955

Dr. Osburn was born January 4, 1872 on a farm in Licking County near Newark, Ohio. Due to certain physical handicaps he was deprived of much of the formal school experiences. In these early formative years his mother taught him, giving him the necessary background from which to ascend to heights of understanding through prodigious reading and his infatuation for the facts of nature that he gleaned from woods and fields of the countryside in which he spent his youth. With this uncommon substitute for formal training he entered The Ohio State University as a special student at the age of 23. It was not long, however, before he earned for himself regular academic standing and was given the Bachelor of Science degree in 1898. After graduation he taught classes at Starling Medical College and gained the Master of Science degree from his Alma Mater. With this he went to Fargo College, North Dakota, and then to Columbia University to earn his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1906. While at Fargo he met Miss Mary Hubbell one of his students whom he later married on August 19, 1903.

He also held such positions as Assistant Professor at Barnard College of Columbia University, Professor and head of the Biology Department of the Connecticut College for Women, Scientific Investigator for the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, and Associate director of the New York Aquarium.

When Professor Herbert Osborn retired from the chairmanship of the Department of Zoology and Entomology the university looked about for an outstanding candidate for the place. It was Raymond Osburn whom they chose to hold this post for 25 years. This was a period of rapid growth for the University and splendid expansion of the Department under his guidance.

For 20 years he guided the destinies of the Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory at Put-in-Bay, Ohio, and largely through his efforts the University acquired possession of Gibraltar Island with the generosity of Mr. Julius Stone. Dr. Osburn was a member of the national honorary Society of Sigma Xi and held membership in 15 scientific societies. Early in his career he was sent by the American Museum of Natural History to study the aquatic life of the Caribbean Sea. Bryozoa, fishes and insects were his chief groups of interest on which he published many papers. Such was his repute that after retiring from the chairmanship of his Department he was called to California to work on the collections of Bryozoa made by the Hancock Foundation expeditions in Pacific waters from Alaska to Peru. As a result he prepared three noteworthy volumes on his studies. For the excellence of one of these he was awarded the Daniel Giraud Elliot 1950 gold Medal by the National Academy of Science. In 1949 The Ohio State University awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Dr. Osburn lived and practiced a philosophy of life that is nowhere better shown than in the volume of 165 letters sent to him at his retirement containing such expressions as:

" . . . your kind and sympathetic attitude has constantly been an inspiration to me."

" . . . The kindness of the man himself, his comprehensive soul, his deep, unerring instinct as to each person's goal."

"Sir, I salute you, great teacher, perfect gentleman, naturalist of the old school, and, above all, a true friend."

He lived as he expressed it in a few lines which he himself wrote as he contemplated his retirement:

"What pleases me most, looking back o'er the years,
As the time for retirement now rapidly nears,
Is the progress of students I've worked with, and on,
As out to the world and its work they have gone.
And I like to think, maybe, I've had a small part
In giving a fine bunch of men a good start.
For a teacher there can be no greater reward,
Though his days may be long and his labors be hard,
Than noting the heights which his students attain,
And feeling his efforts have not been in vain."

Dr. Osburn died August 6, and was buried August 9, near his birthplace at Newark, Ohio.

Department of Zoology and Entomology.
The Ohio State University.