

deep as that of the Wombats. This part of the jaw has never been seen before, and will probably cause Prof. Owen to modify somewhat his restoration of *Diprotodon*. GERARD KREFFT.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, SYDNEY, Sep. 28, 1873.

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## OBITUARY.

### PROFESSOR AGASSIZ.

By the death of Prof. Agassiz, Science has lost one of her most distinguished students. Louis Jean Rodolphe Agassiz was born on May 28th, 1807, in the parish of Mottier, between the lakes of Neuchâtel and Morat. He received his early education at Bienne, from which he went to the Academy at Lausanne, and afterwards studied medicine and science at the Universities of Zürich, Heidelberg, and Munich. In 1837 he was Professor of Natural History in the University of Neuchâtel, but long before this he had manifested that great power of investigation which speedily raised him to a high position among the scientific men of his time.

His earliest studies were directed to ichthyology, and especially to the fish of his native country. His first memoir on this subject was published in 1828, and in 1829 we find him describing the more remarkable fish obtained by Spix and Martius in their Brazilian travels. He afterwards turned his attention more particularly to fossil fish, for the classification of which he proposed a new system, founded on characters derived from the scales. In fossil ichthyology Agassiz speedily became the chief authority, and after publishing numerous memoirs treating of separate branches of this difficult subject, all of the highest value, he brought his labours in this department to their culmination by the publication of his magnificent "Recherches sur les Poissons fossiles," which appeared at Neuchâtel between the years 1833 and 1844 in five large quarto volumes, illustrated by the same number of volumes of beautifully prepared plates in folio. This work, which is admirably executed in all respects, is undoubtedly Agassiz's grandest contribution to scientific literature; it has never been, and probably never will be, surpassed. In aid of its publication the Geological Society voted the author the proceeds of the Wollaston Donation Fund in 1833, and in recognition of the valuable services rendered by him to this particular department of science, the same Society, in 1836, presented him with the Wollaston medal. Whilst this work was in progress, Agassiz engaged in the study of certain groups of fossils, especially those belonging to the class Echinodermata (starfishes and sea-urchins), upon which he published many memoirs, some of them prepared in conjunction with M. T. Desor. His "Nomenclator Zoologicus," commenced in 1842, but not completed until 1848, is a work of enormous labour, containing a nearly complete classified list of all names employed in zoology up to the date of its preparation for genera and groups of higher systematic value, with references to the authors who invented them and the works in which they were first used. A task of almost

equal magnitude was the preparation of a "Bibliographia Zoologiæ et Geologiæ," intended to furnish a similarly classified catalogue of works published on these subjects. This list, originally prepared by Agassiz for his own reference, enlarged but very imperfectly edited, was published in England by the Ray Society between 1848 and 1854.

As if these labours, together with the duties of his professorship, were not sufficient occupation, Agassiz during this period also devoted much of his attention to the phenomena of glaciers and of glacial action, especially the nature of the movement of glaciers, and the traces of the former existence of such ice-rivers in places where nothing of the kind is now to be seen. He had, of course, fine opportunities of studying these phenomena in his native Alps, but he also visited this country and searched for traces of glacial action in the north of England, and in Scotland and Ireland. His researches and those of the late J. D. Forbes undoubtedly furnished the foundation for the views now generally received as to the nature and action of glaciers. We may safely say that the "Etudes sur les Glaciers," published by Agassiz in 1840, formed a most brilliant contribution to the literature of a subject until then involved in much obscurity, and that it gave him a European reputation in a line of research in which he was previously almost unknown.

In 1846 Agassiz was invited to go to the United States of America, and in 1847 he was appointed Professor of Zoology and Geology in the University of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he remained until his death. In 1861 the Copley medal was awarded to him by the Royal Society, and he held honorary degrees from several universities.

His greatest literary work after his naturalization in America is his "Contributions to the Natural History of the United States," of which the reprinted "Essay on Classification" has had a great influence on zoology.

He published also in 1868 the results of the "Thayer Expedition," entitled "Journey in Brazil."

Among his smaller works we may mention his "Essay on the Study of Natural History," and his "Comparative Embryology," as of much value for educational purposes. In his general views Agassiz was strongly anti-Darwinian.

During his residence of twenty-seven years in the United States, Agassiz devoted himself heart and soul to his professorial duties, and mainly by his influence and popularity succeeded in attaching to the institution to which he belonged a most valuable museum of zoology and comparative anatomy, the results of the investigations carried on in which have already furnished many important memoirs. By his strenuous exertions he has raised in the United States a school of naturalists, many of whom, in the quality of the work done by them, quite equal their brethren on this side of the Atlantic, and from this point of view, at any rate, the States owe a heavy debt of gratitude to their great adopted citizen who has just departed.—*The Globe*, Dec. 16, 1873.