

MEMORIAL OF EDMOND OTIS HOVEY

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By the sudden death on September 27 of Dr. Edmond Otis Hovey, the circle of his many friends has suffered a severe loss and American science has been rendered the poorer to the extent of an unique and commanding personality, and a vigorous and conscientious worker in his chosen field. Dr. Hovey possessed that rare combination, so essential to constructive science, of a fertile and idealistic imagination and a painstaking devotion to detail which never stopped short of the truth. His many contributions to literature were characterized by careful and clear cut accuracy of statement which rendered all his utterances authoritative.



EDMOND O. HOVEY
1862-1924

(*Photograph by courtesy of Am.
Museum of Nat. History*)

He was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on September 15th, 1862. His father, the Rev. Howard Carter Hovey, was an amateur geologist of no mean ability, being a Fellow of the Geological Society of America having specialized in the geology of caverns. It was through him, no doubt, that Edmond Hovey early acquired the taste for geology which shaped his later career, and paved the way for his life's work.

His early education was acquired in the public schools of Peoria, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; and New Haven, Connecticut, so that, when at the age of 18 he entered Yale University; he had already traveled considerably over this country and had had his ideas broadened by contact with a variety of places and people.

Upon graduation he became a teacher going first to Jamesville, and Elk River, Minnesota as principal and superintendent of schools. The year 1886 saw him back at Yale as a graduate student and assistant in the Mineralogical Laboratory of Sheffield Scientific School. Here he had the singular good fortune of studying under two eminent American teachers, James D. Dana and Samuel L. Penfield. When in 1889 he was given his degree of Doctor of Philosophy, he had been for a year assistant principal of the Water-

bury High School, and had been married to Esther A. Lancraft of New Haven. A year after taking his doctor's degree, Mr. Hovey went to Europe, spending the greater part of 1890-91 in Heidelberg, where he studied under Professor Rosenbusch, and upon his return to Waterbury, became principal of the High School.

So studying and teaching Edmond Otis Hovey rounded out the period of his preparation for a career of distinction and responsibility as a geologist, and, influenced by the teaching of such men as the elder and the younger Dana, Penfield and Rosenbusch, it was inevitable that his geology should be based upon a broad and substantial foundation in which mineralogy played no small part.

The opportunity to enter the field of professional geological work came in 1892 when he was appointed superintendent of the Missouri State Exhibit of Minerals at the Columbian Exposition. When this collection of lead, zinc and iron ores, together with other economic minerals, was assembled in Chicago in 1893, the high quality of the work done in displaying the various minerals won for Dr. Hovey his appointment as assistant Curator in Geology at the American Museum of Natural History. Here working under the late Professor Robert Parr Whitfield, Dr. Hovey may be said to have begun the second period of his life, that in which he emerged as a professional geologist. His period of service in the American Museum lasted for thirty years, and was only terminated by his sudden death. In 1901 Dr. Hovey was advanced to the post of associate curator, and upon the death of Professor Whitfield in 1910 he became Curator of Geology.

These 30 years, covering as they do the time of intensive growth of a great educational institution, gave full play to the talents which Dr. Hovey had developed while a teacher and a student. Not that he ever ceased to be either, but his teaching now reached to the wide compass of the "man in the street" and his studies were stimulated and inspired by contact with a great wealth of scientific material. Always a traveler it now became his duty to travel widely in the service of the Museum, and some of its most notable specimens and suites of specimens are the results of his journeys. Among the most noteworthy of these geological pilgrimages were those that he made in 1902, to study the active volcano of Mount Pelée, Martinique, and that which he under-

took in 1915 when he led the Croker Land Expedition for the relief of a party of explorers sent out the preceding year. It is highly significant that, of the one hundred and fifty papers that constitute his contributions to the literature of geology, the last to appear (*American Journal of Science*, September 1924) dealt with the geology of northwest Greenland, and was based upon his observations made upon this expedition. One has but to read the clear, crisp statements embodied in this paper, the materials of which were acquired amid notable hardships, to form a picture of the indomitable devotion and energy that characterized all of his work.

Among the most important services that Dr. Hovey has rendered to geological science were those which fell to his lot as secretary of the Geological Society of America for sixteen years (1907-1922), and as recording secretary and editor of the *New York Academy of Sciences* for nine years (1907-15). In both of these organizations, during the period of his incumbency, Dr. Hovey's influence was potent and active, but particularly was his energy and administrative ability valued in the conduct of the affairs of the former. When in 1922, he found that the pressure of work no longer admitted of his retaining the secretaryship of the Geological Society, that body presented him with a loving cup in appreciation of his notable service.

But of far more value than any such material token is the memory that Dr. Hovey leaves among us who survive him. It has been truthfully said that the real test of a man's work and influence comes after he has passed away, and this is essentially so because those among us who have succeeded in our professions to the extent of bringing the light of knowledge to many people, leave a gap which is hard to fill. They are missed. Edmond Otis Hovey has left such a gap, he is and will be missed by very many.