Alfred Stanley Marsh.

ALFRED STANLEY MARSH was born at Crewkerne on February 1, 1892. He died on January 5, 1916, being shot through the heart by a German sniper, who had found a weak spot in the parapet of the trench. Death was instantaneous. One who ran to his aid was killed in the same way.

Marsh was educated from 1903 to 1909 at Sexey's School, Bruton, and here his taste for Natural History received encouragement. He obtained a First Class in both the Junior and Senior Oxford Local Examinations, and in both he gained distinction in Botany (among other subjects). In 1908, when only sixteen years of age, he gained the County Scholarship and an Exhibition and Subsizarship at Trinity College, Cambridge; but he did not enter Cambridge University until 1909, when he also won the Soley Scholarship. He surmounted the obstacle of the Latin and Greek tests in the Little-go, being placed in the third class, and wiring to his Head master, characteristically—'Sorry I have passed one class higher than I intended.'

As an undergraduate at Trinity his record was a distinguished one. In 1911 he obtained a First Class in the Natural Sciences Tripos, Part I. He then specialized in Botany, and in 1913 he was placed in the First Class in Part II of the same Tripos. He was thereupon offered the Frank Smart Studentship in the gift of Gonville and Caius College, accepted it, and migrated from Trinity to Caius. This Studentship afforded him the opportunity of doing research work in Botany, of which he availed himself with energy and enthusiasm. He acted as a demonstrator in Professor Seward's classes in Elementary Botany, and on Dr. Moss's field excursions, his keenness and good humour endearing him to the students.

Marsh's published work consists of four papers which appeared in 1914-15:

(1) 'Notes on the Anatomy of *Stangeria paradoxa*.' New Phyt., xiii, pp. 18-30. 1914. Marsh demonstrated an interesting mode of vascular supply of the leaves in this Cycad, and followed the behaviour of the centripetal and centrifugal xylem strands of the leaf throughout its whole length. His conclusion was that 'a close relationship can be argued between the modern Cycadales and the fossil Cycadofilices'.

(2) 'The History of the Occurrence of *Azolla* in the British Isles and in Europe generally.' Proc. Cambridge Phil. Soc., xvii, pp. 383-6. 1914. This paper gives an account of the occurrence of *A. caroliniana*

and *A. filiculoides* in Britain, and is a valuable basis for the study of these two interesting and rapidly spreading aliens.

(3) 'The Anatomy of some Xerophilous Species of *Cheilanthes* and *Pellaea*.' Ann. Bot., xxviii, pp. 671-84. 1914. In this paper Marsh gave a comparative account of the stelar anatomy of several closely related Ferns; and in the case of the peculiar vascular structure of the petioles he showed that they could all be derived from Sinnott's primitive type with three endarch protoxylems.

(4) 'The Maritime Ecology of Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.' Journ. of Ecology, iii, pp. 65-92. 1915. This is the report of a valuable piece of work undertaken by a group of young Cambridge men, altogether ten in number. A short account of the work was given in 1913 before the British Association by P. H. Allen ('by whose untimely death', Marsh writes, 'we lost a dear friend and a splendid fellow worker'). Marsh was the chosen spokesman of this group of (in more senses than one) synecologists, and his paper is an admirable example of vegetational survey work and a demonstration of the possibilities of co-operation in ecological research.

Marsh took a commission in November, 1914, in the 8th (Service) Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry. He was made First-Lieutenant in April, 1915, and got his Captaincy in August, being then only twenty-three years of age. Throwing himself whole-heartedly into his new duties he quickly won popularity with his men and the affection of his fellow officers. Letters from the Front, from officers and men alike, testify to the deep sorrow which his death inspired even among those to whom bereavements are of the texture of daily life.

While devoting himself entirely to his military duties he longed for the time when he should be able again to take up the botanical work that he loved. His plans for the future included a continuance of the synecological work at Holme, a series of experiments on the relations of closely allied species to their different habitats, and a share (with his friend R. C. McLean) in an investigation of flower structure in the Ranales. His botanical interests were broad, and to every discussion he brought fresh and suggestive ideas and a power of seeing the distant implications of hypotheses. His earliest botanical enthusiasm was floristic, and he astonished one by his uncanny ability to state accurately the 'census-number' of every British flowering plant. His Cambridge training opened his eyes to the manifold avenues of research which Botany presents; and though he had not yet settled down to any one definite line of work, it would probably have been some branches of Phylogenetic Anatomy and Ecology which would have claimed him. By his death botanical science is the poorer for the loss of a keen vision, an agile imagination, and an enthusiastic capacity for work.

His personality was of the frankest, merriest and most good-humoured. He radiated gaiety and good fellowship. Always ready for a jest, his quaint wit enlivened many a conversation. His sense of the odd possibilities of words led him into the paths of humorous verse and prose. He was editor of, and responsible for a great part of the matter in the latest number of that celebrated periodical 'The Tea Phytologist'. His cheerful goodwill and appreciative outlook upon life made his presence the best possible antidote to depression. All who knew him sincerely mourn the loss of his bright and stimulating personality. To his many devoted friends his death brought bitter grief for the passing of one whose comradeship is among the happiest memories of their lives.

R. H. C.

CAMBRIDGE,
March, 1916.

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