

OBITUARIES.

MERVIN HERBERT NEVIL STORY-MASKELYNE (1823-1911).

(With Portrait, Plate VII.)

Nevil Story-Maskelyne¹ (or Maskelyne, as he was more often called) was born at Basset Down House, near Swindon, in Wiltshire, on September 3, 1823, and died at the same place on May 20, 1911. He was the son of Anthony Mervin Reeve Storey, F.R.S. (1791-1879), who in 1819 had married Margaret Maskelyne (1786-1858), the only child of the Rev. Dr. Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811), the famous Astronomer-Royal. She was an accomplished woman, and the sole heiress of the Basset Down and Purton estates of the Maskelyne family in Wiltshire. Their son, Nevil Storey, entered Wadham College, Oxford, in 1840, where his father before him had had a distinguished career, and he took his degree in mathematics in 1845. Although originally destined for the legal profession (his father had practised as a barrister), he early took an interest in science, at a time when but few facilities were offered for its study in the University.

His early work was mainly in chemistry, which he studied with his friend, Benjamin Brodie. He also worked in Faraday's laboratory at the Royal Institution, and saw much of Liebig during the latter's visit to England. He played a prominent part in the establishment of science teaching in Oxford, and was secretary of the first committee formed to promote the scheme for building a university museum. From 1850 he acted as deputy reader in mineralogy in the place of Dean Buckland, and was appointed to the professorship² in 1856, a post held by him until 1895, when he was succeeded by H. A. Miers. Amongst those of his Oxford pupils are the well-known names, W. J. Lewis, L. Fletcher,

¹ Formerly Storey. In the titles of his published works his name appears variously as Storey Maskelyne, Nevil Story-Maskelyne, N. Story Maskelyne, N. S. Maskelyne, and Professor Maskelyne. His first name was often spelt Mervyn.

² The Oxford Chair of Mineralogy, founded in 1813, was officially styled a Readership, and in 1861 a Professorship.

and H. A. Miers. The duties of the professor were not very arduous, nor did they necessitate residence in Oxford for more than a short period each year. Under these circumstances he was able, whilst still holding the Oxford professorship, to accept the appointment of Keeper of Minerals in the British Museum, a post he held for nearly a quarter of a century (1857–80).

In 1857 the mineral collections of the British Museum were separated from the palaeontological collections, and a special department of minerals was created with Professor Story-Maskelyne as the first keeper. It was here that practically all his original work in mineralogy was performed, and he did much to raise the collection to its present high position amongst the mineral collections of the world. At first his only assistant was the late Thomas Davies, for whose training as a skilled mineralogist he was entirely responsible; later, at various periods, there were Dr. Viktor von Lang (1862–4), Dr. Walter Flight (1867–85), W. J. Lewis (1875–7), and L. Fletcher (1878–80). A chemical laboratory, so essential for the determination of minerals, was not placed at the disposal of the department until 1867, when one was fitted up in a private house outside the museum premises. Previous to that date, owing to fire risks, none but the very simplest chemical tests could be made, and this deficiency led to the development of optical and goniometrical methods. As early as 1861 a microscope fitted with a graduated rotating stage and accessories for polarized light was constructed for the examination of thin sections of meteoric stones; and a reflecting goniometer with telescope was designed for measuring crystals. In this way a considerable amount of important research work was performed; but in the meantime routine work connected with the registering, labelling, and arranging of the collections was not neglected. With the sole help of Thomas Davies large numbers of specimens which had been previously stored away were sorted and labelled, and the enormous mass of material in the whole collection was re-classified according to the crystallo-chemical system published by Gustav Rose in 1852.

During Story-Maskelyne's term of office the collections grew by the addition of no less than 43,000 specimens, many of them being selected individually on their own merits. For example, to mention only two specimens acquired respectively in 1858 and 1879: the 'Latrobe' nugget of crystallized gold weighing 23 oz. troy, from Victoria; and a large crystalline mass of bismuth with films of gold, from Bolivia. Mention may also be made of the Allan-Greg and the Koksharov collections acquired in 1860 and 1865 respectively, and the crystal collection

of Dr. A. Krantz in 1859. Special attention was given to the collection of meteorites, and the number of representative falls was increased from 72 to 312. All this work was done while the collections were still in the old British Museum building at Bloomsbury, before their removal to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington.

On the death of his father in 1879, the care of the family estates in Wiltshire and important public duties necessitated Story-Maskelyne's retirement from the British Museum in 1880, though he still held the Oxford professorship for many years later. For thirteen years (1880-92) he was a Member of Parliament for the Northern or Cricklade division of Wiltshire, and for a long period a member of the Wiltshire County Council and Chairman of its Agricultural Committee. He was also a county magistrate for Wiltshire and deputy-lieutenant for Brecknockshire. Although living the life of a country gentleman, interested in his estates and in the improvement of agriculture, he did not sever his connexion with the scientific world. For several years (1891-8) he was President of the Mineralogical Society, attending and presiding over its meetings with unflinching regularity, and with his fund of reminiscences adding much to the discussions. He was also Vice-President of the Chemical Society (1878-81), the Geological Society (1882-3), and the Royal Society (1897-9), and President of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (1883-6). He was a member (1881-94) of the British Association Committee on the teaching of science in elementary schools, and Chairman (1898-1908) of that on the structure of crystals.

Of his published works, special mention may be made of the catalogue of the Duke of Marlborough's collection of engraved gems (1870), and the treatise on crystallography published in 1895. Much of the latter had been written thirty years previously, and some of the proof-sheets had long been placed in the hands of students. Had its publication not been so long delayed many of the special descriptive terms that were proposed would, no doubt, have found acceptance by crystallographers. In his book, as in his lectures at Oxford and before the Chemical Society in 1874-5, he laid special stress on the symmetry of crystals.

In the determination of the mineral constituents of meteoric stones he did pioneer work, and was the first to recognize the presence of enstatite, whilst asmanite, oldhamite, and osbornite were described as new meteoric minerals. Cornish minerals also claimed his attention, and of these he long ago described and named andrewsite, langite, liskeardite, lyellite, and waringtonite, the first three of which still rank as well-defined

species. The wide interests he took may be judged from the accompanying bibliography. He gave much attention to the minerals that were used in classical times, and formed a fine collection of antique engraved gems.

The value of Story-Maskelyne's scientific work was recognized by the honours bestowed upon him from several quarters. In 1870 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, of which his father and grandfather had also been Fellows. He was an Honorary Fellow of Wadham College, and in 1903 received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science at Oxford. Several foreign scientific societies elected him a corresponding member, and in 1898 he was awarded the Wollaston gold medal of the Geological Society.

He married in 1858 Thereza, daughter of J. Dillwyn Llewelyn, F.R.S.; she survives him, together with their three daughters, one the widow of the Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, and another the wife of Sir Arthur Rücker.

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¹ Compiled by G. Savigar, Chief attendant in charge of the Library of the Mineral Department, British Museum.

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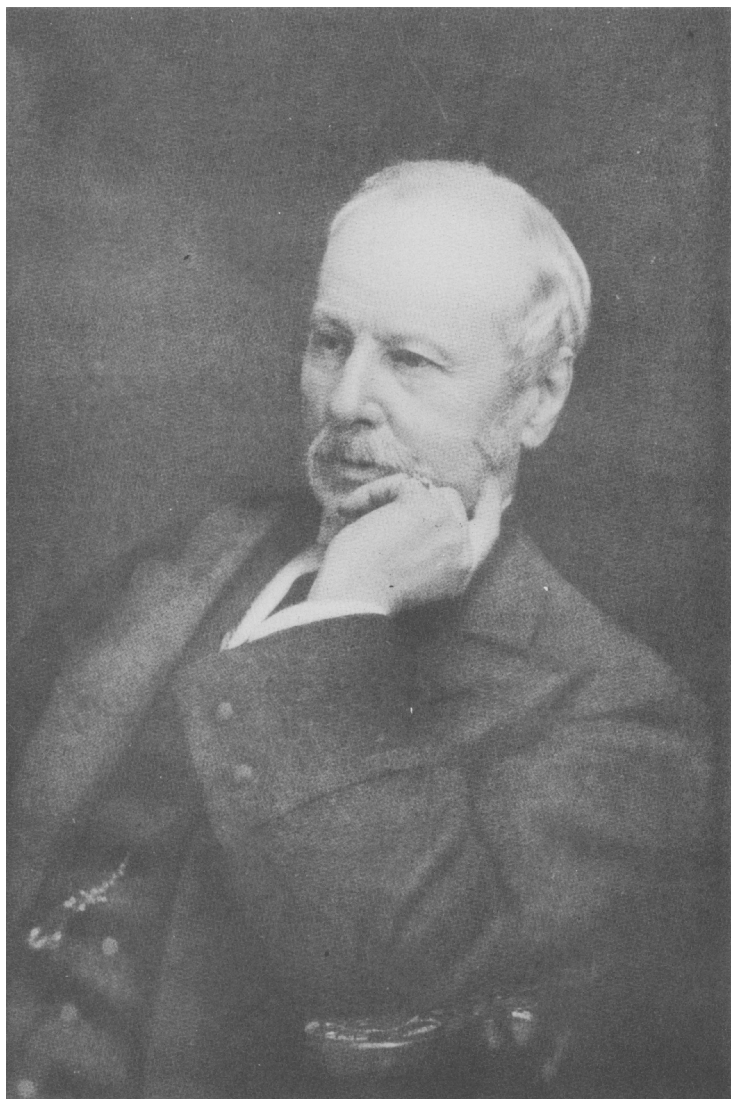
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CHARLES BARET (1831-1910).

Ch. Baret was born at Dinan in Brittany, and for thirty-seven years he carried on the business of apothecary in Nantes. His spare time was devoted to the collecting of minerals and in making a systematic mineralogical exploration of the department Loire-Inférieure. He was an original member of the French Mineralogical Society and three times its vice-

¹ The titles of this and of some of the other pamphlets have been taken from the Bibliography given in the *Wilts. Arch. Nat. Hist. Mag.*, 1911.



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(From a photograph taken in April, 1898.)