

“On examining the soundings the slope will be found to vary from 6 feet to 19 feet dip in 100 feet horizontal, a dip that cannot possibly injure or strain the cable.”

With regard to the remaining portion of the slope to the southward into the Bay of Biscay, it has never been examined with a view of ascertaining the angle. Though in time a great many soundings have been accumulated, as the charts will show, they are the results of many ships, and you will understand that, as a consequence of the uncertainty of finding the precise position of a ship at sea, when the results of two or more ships are compared, there may be considerable errors. But from what we have, the result is the same, i.e. a gentle slope varying from 2° to 10° from the horizontal.

I send you some slopes drawn from what information we possess, which include the edge of the deep water from 46° N. lat. to 54° N. lat., and which speak for themselves. You will see that the angles are as I say. I may further mention that I know of no steep submarine precipices in the oceans in any part of the world, except those round coral islands, and perhaps in a few cases round the edges of submerged banks, doubtless of volcanic origin.

W. J. L. WHARTON.

OBITUARY.

WILHELM BARNIM DAMES.

BORN JUNE 9, 1843.

DIED DECEMBER 22, 1898.

By the death of Professor Dames, Germany loses one of its foremost palæontologists, and the University of Berlin one of its most distinguished Professors. Born at Stolp, in Pomerania, in 1843, he studied at Breslau under Ferdinand Roemer, and also at Berlin under Beyrich. He graduated at Breslau in 1868, his thesis on the Devonian rocks of Freiburg, Lower Silesia, being published by the German Geological Society in the same year. The troublous times of the Franco-German War then interrupted his researches, and in September, 1870, he was wounded near Chevilly. After recovery he went to Berlin, in 1871, as assistant in the Geological Museum of the University, and became Custos in 1875. He was appointed Professor Extraordinarius in the University in 1878, and was promoted to an ordinary professorship, on the death of Beyrich, in 1891. He was elected a member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1892.

During the first decade of his scientific researches Professor Dames was occupied chiefly with fossil Invertebrata, and his most important contribution was his description of the Echinoidea of the Jurassic of N.W. Germany, published by the German Geological Society in 1872. In 1881 he began to take special interest in the Vertebrata, publishing a small note on some Selachian teeth (*Rhombodus Binckhorsti*) from the Maastricht Chalk. At this time he was entrusted with a memoir on the famous second specimen of *Archæopteryx*, which was published, in 1884, in vol. ii of the “Palæontologische Abhandlungen”—a valuable serial founded by

Professors Dames and Kayser, on the plan of the older "Palæontographica," in 1883. The memoir on *Archæopteryx*, with its brief supplement in 1897 (Sitzb. k. preuss. Akad. Wiss.), will remain one of the classics of Palæontology. After a visit to Greece, Professor Dames described some remains of *Hyænarcos*, *Cervus*, and a rodent from Pikermi (1883); while in 1888 he returned temporarily to the study of Invertebrata, publishing a paper on Crustacea from the Cretaceous of Mount Lebanon. The most important memoirs of his later years were those on the Ganoid Fishes of the Muschelkalk (1889), on Chelonia from the North German Tertiaries (1894), on Zeuglodont remains from Egypt (1894), and on *Plesiosaurus* from the Lias of Southern Germany (1895). Of these, the first three were published in the "Palæontologische Abhandlungen," while the fourth was a memoir of the Prussian Academy. At the time of his death the Professor had in preparation a description of the Neocomian fishes of Hildesheim, Hanover, and a paper on *Stereosternum* from Brazil. From 1885 onwards he had been joint-editor of the "Neues Jahrbuch für Mineralogie."

Professor Dames travelled extensively in Europe and was well known in this country, where he was honoured by election as Foreign Correspondent to the Geological Society of London in 1891, and as Foreign Member of the same Society in 1895. He married a Russian lady, Baroness Mathilde von Toll, of Kuckers, in Esthonia. His last journey was one in the vain search of health, through Norway, during the summer vacation of 1898.

WE have just received the mournful intelligence of the death, from pneumonia, of our valued friend of 33 years, PROFESSOR O. C. MARSH, of Yale University, New Haven, Conn., on the 18th March, in his 68th year. Few men of this century have done more to advance vertebrate palæontology than Professor Marsh, or have left behind larger contributions to the science.—H. W.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY, JERMYN STREET.—It has been decided by the Government not to remove the Museum of Practical Geology from Jermyn Street to South Kensington. Opinions have differed with regard to the desirability of this course. On purely scientific grounds it would have been well to have the Geological Survey collection of fossils, which are stratigraphically arranged, alongside of the British Museum fossils, which are zoologically arranged. On the other hand, the practical uses of the Geological Survey and Museum would have been seriously imperilled by a transfer to South Kensington. We hope, now that the matter is settled, that proper accommodation will speedily be afforded for the Geological Survey Offices.