

strasse, Nr. 6, Vienna, Austria. If preferred, members may send \$4.30 to the chairman of the American committee, who will transmit the proper amount to Dr. Strohmer.

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Respectfully,

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FRANCIS WYATT, 39 South William St., New York, N. Y.

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### OBITUARY.<sup>1</sup>

CHARLES EDWARDS COLBY was born in Lawrence, Mass., October 18, 1855. He was a direct descendant of Anthony Colby, who came to this country from Beccles, England, with Governor Winthrop's company, in 1630; and was also closely related to Captain Valentine Bagley, the subject of Whittier's celebrated poem entitled "The Captain's Well."

He early manifested an interest in electricity and chemistry, making a successful arc lamp, when only fourteen years old,

<sup>1</sup> Read at the meeting of the New York Section, December 10, 1897.

from the movement of an old clock; and constructing magic lanterns, spectroscopes, and other physical apparatus, from the crudest of materials. In 1868 he came to New York City, and entered Grammar School No. 35, in West 13th St., then under the charge of Dr. Hunter, from which he graduated in 1872, and soon after went to Germany to study, returning in time to take the entrance examinations for Columbia College in 1874. His energy and ambition are well shown by his attempt to carry on three courses at once—civil engineering, mining engineering, and chemistry,—a privilege then allowed by the college, and which would undoubtedly have been successful but for an attack of pneumonia in 1876, which compelled him to relinquish for a time his chemical studies, but permitted the completion of the two other courses, and, on graduation in 1877, he was awarded the degrees of C.E. and M.E.

He then accepted the position of Private Assistant to Professor Chas. F. Chandler, and was engaged for several years, under Dr. Chandler's direction, in many important investigations, especially in the field of organic chemistry. Among these investigations should be mentioned that of artificial alizarine, in connection with several suits brought into this country under the Graebe and Liebermann patent by the representatives of the Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik, and which involved, first, the question of the identity of the artificial with the natural alizarine, and, later, the relations of flavopurpurine and anthrapurpurine to the original patent. There were also investigations upon the sulphanilic acid colors, naphthionic acid colors, thionin colors, the various sulpho acids of rosanilin, naphthol yellow, the composition of the archil imported into this country, the manufacture of chloroform from acetone, and many other similar subjects.

The ability exhibited in these researches led to his appointment, on October 6, 1884, as a fellow in chemistry, and the separate instruction in organic chemistry was thereafter confided to him. On June 7, 1886, he was advanced to the grade of instructor in organic chemistry; and on March 3, 1890, the chair of adjunct professor in organic chemistry was created for him, and this position he held at the time of his decease on October 15, 1897.

During these thirteen years of teaching and investigation, he has added very materially to our store of knowledge in his chosen sphere of activity, and many important researches have been carried on in the laboratory of organic chemistry either by him personally, or under his immediate supervision. . The production of the aromatic sulphoxides by the action of thionyl chloride and aluminum chloride upon the hydrocarbons of the benzene series; the preparation of aromatic nitriles from aromatic acids and fatty nitriles; the preparation of the imids of bibasic fatty acids by the interaction of the nitrile and the acid; the production of the corresponding imids of the bibasic aromatic acids by heating together the acid and a fatty nitrile; these, and many other organic researches, might be recalled in this connection.

Professor Colby was a man of most versatile attainments, being not only a chemist of exceptional ability, but also an expert in physics, mathematics, mechanical drawing, and music. As a teacher, he was most careful and painstaking, devoting his entire time to his students, and assisting and encouraging them by every means in his power. His lectures were models of concise classification, and his explanations were always lucid and full. A deep and analytical thinker, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the true scientist, which forgets all else in the search for truth, he inspired his students with much of his own enthusiasm, and finally sacrificed his life in the pursuit of the science he loved so well.

It was most unfortunate that his physical equipment was not at all in keeping with the urgings of his ambition, and for the last few years of his life his constantly increasing weakness, brought on largely by overwork, practically debarred him from all laboratory investigation. In spite of his illness and the distressing realization of the inability of the body longer to respond to the calls of the energetic and brilliant mind, he bore his sufferings with the most heroic and uncomplaining fortitude, and fought the battle bravely to the end.

Columbia University, and the world of science, have suffered a very grievous loss in the death of this able and devoted scientist.

MARSTON TAYLOR BOGERT.