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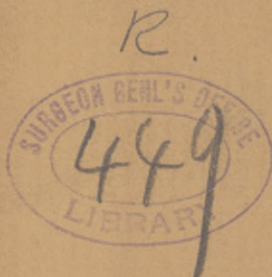
JEROME HENRY KIDDER

A NOTICE PREPARED BY

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JEROME HENRY KIDDER.

JEROME HENRY KIDDER, whose untimely death has deprived this Society of one of its most active and respected members, was born October 26, 1842, in Baltimore county, Maryland, and there his boyhood days were spent. Entering Harvard College as a freshman at the age of sixteen years, he was graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1862, and shortly after, having tendered his services for the war, he was placed by General Saxton in charge of the Sea Island plantations, near Beaufort, S. C. There contracting yellow fever, he was obliged to return north early in 1863, but, upon recovery, he enlisted in the Tenth Maryland infantry, in which regiment he served as private and non-commissioned officer for about a year. He was then appointed a medical cadet, and in that capacity was employed in the hospitals near the capital until after the war had closed. The study of medicine, begun at that time, was continued in Baltimore, and in 1866 he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Maryland. The degree of Master of Arts, in regular course, was also conferred upon him by Harvard College in 1865.

On June 18, 1866, a few months after completing his medical education, Dr. Kidder was commissioned an assistant surgeon in the United States Navy, in which he served for eighteen years with much distinction. He was promoted to passed assistant surgeon April 5, 1871, and to surgeon May 19, 1876, and resigned his commission June 18, 1884.

His first detail was to the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia, where he remained a little over a year. From 1876 to 1870 he was attached as assistant medical officer to the United States ship Idaho, then stationed off Nagasaki, Japan, as



the general hospital for the Asiatic squadron. While on this station he received from the King of Portugal the decoration of the Military Order of Christ, in recognition of gracious professional services to a distressed vessel of His Majesty's navy; and during the memorable typhoon of September 21, 1868, he displayed his faculty for accurate observation by making a careful plotting of the storm's track. In 1874 and 1875 he served, in connection with the United States steamer *Swatara*, as surgeon and naturalist of the Transit of Venus expedition to Kerguelen island, and in 1877 and 1878 as surgeon of the United States steamer *Alliance* in the Mediterranean. On the latter cruise he was married, at Constantinople, September 18, 1878, to Anne Mary, daughter of the Honorable Horace Maynard, Minister of the United States to Turkey. During the summers of 1875 and 1879 he was assigned to special duty with the small naval steamers *Bluelight* and *Speedwell*, engaged in fishery investigations on the New England coast, and in December, 1882, became the first surgeon of the Fish Commission steamer *Albatross*, on which he remained until the following April. His shore service was performed mainly at the Naval Hospital and Laboratory, Brooklyn, from 1871 to 1874, and at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Washington, from 1879 to 1882.

Dr. Kidder was recognized as one of the most accomplished and efficient surgeons in his corps, and his frank and genial disposition gained him hosts of friends. The advantages of the naval laboratory at Brooklyn, where he served as an assistant from 1871 to 1874, probably led to the chemical and physical inquiries which afterward became his favorite studies, and in all probability they determined the character of his principal future work. The Brooklyn laboratory was then the only one under the Navy Department equipped for general chemical investigations, and it was also the naval depot for medical supplies. In addition to the customary analyses of drugs, Dr. Kidder was assigned many special problems, and while at this place he also prepared a chemical test case and manual of instructions for the use of

medical officers on board ship, which, slightly modified, is still issued to naval vessels.

It was from Brooklyn that Dr. Kidder was ordered to join the scientific party sent out by the United States Government to observe the transit of Venus at Kerguelen island in 1874. Four months were spent in the desolate and inclement spot selected for the station, and during that period Dr. Kidder was indefatigable in his study of the natural history, geology and climatology of the island. No group of animals or plants was neglected, and notwithstanding the comparative scantiness of the field, his labors were well rewarded. After his return to Washington he remained about a year at the Smithsonian Institution studying, with the coöperation of several specialists, the material which he had obtained. The results were published by the National Museum in two bulletins—one descriptive of the birds, the other covering the remaining subjects, with a special monograph on *Chionis minor*, which has been regarded as his most valuable contribution to zoology. The outcome of this single expedition was sufficient to demonstrate Dr. Kidder's ability and fitness as a naturalist, and to prove that he might readily have attained eminence in that pursuit had he chosen it as a profession. Appreciating the importance of observing every detail which could elucidate the habits or distribution of a species, his descriptions are replete with interesting notes, which add greatly to their value, and he was equally successful in discussing structure and relations.

This brief sojourn at the Smithsonian Institution was fruitful in many ways, and the relations then established with Professor Baird, soon ripening into a warm and lasting friendship, were instrumental in finally severing his connection with the navy. In fact, a career in natural history seems at that time to have been seriously considered by him, if we may judge from the elaborate plans prepared for an expedition to the Antarctic regions, under the auspices of the Institution, which was to have been in his charge. Circum-

stances, however, delayed the execution of this project, and it was finally abandoned.

The first published record indicating Dr. Kidder's interest in hygiene is contained in his report as surgeon of the steamer *Alliance* during 1878. This paper states in forcible terms the requirements for a healthy ship, and closes with a "Memorandum of a partial examination of the impurities of the air on board the *Alliance*," and contains also a description of the apparatus improvised for the occasion. The simplicity of these methods of obtaining condensed moisture and of securing the impurities of the air on small glass slips and watch-crystals led the author to suggest the propriety of supplying similar outfits, with some additional appliances, to all naval vessels—a recommendation which was soon adopted and carried out.

In 1879 there was started in Washington, under the charge of Dr. Kidder, a small naval laboratory, consisting in the beginning of only a single room, and intended primarily for the special examinations which he had recently proposed. The limited amount of money available for the purpose made it necessary to resort to very crude appliances, but in no way checked the ardor with which the work was carried on. Under the liberal and energetic policy of Surgeon General Wales, by whom the laboratory had been founded, the facilities for study were rapidly increased, larger appropriations were obtained, and in the course of two or three years the young establishment was converted into the Museum of Hygiene, as it is known to-day. The principal investigations conducted by Dr. Kidder during his three years' assignment to this duty consisted in the chemical and microscopical analysis of the air with respect to the amount and character of the influences exerted in the production of disease by its organic and inorganic impurities, while among his other duties were the examination of pathological specimens and the consolidation of meteorological reports derived from naval sources.

The zeal and earnestness displayed in all this work, his

untiring devotion to the cause of hygiene, and, above all, his strength and breadth of mind, especially fitted him for leadership in this important movement, with which he would undoubtedly have continued to be identified under more stable conditions of environment. His several reports upon this subject indicate most careful and painstaking observations, and exhibit marked success in the development of ingenious though, for the most part, exceedingly simple methods of experiment.

His earlier inquiries in hygiene had reference mainly to the surroundings of the laboratory, but prior to his detachment he was detailed to assist in two special investigations.

The first and more important of these was an inquiry into the cause of the recurrent epidemic of yellow fever on board the United States Steamship Plymouth, in conjunction with Medical Inspector Dean and Naval Constructor Wilson, and was executed in 1880. The report submitted by this board was published in the report of the Surgeon General of the Navy for 1880. The following year Dr. Kidder, with Medical Director Browne and Passed Assistant Surgeon Griffiths, examined with unusual care the sanitary condition of the proposed site for the new naval observatory at Washington, and upon their favorable decision depended in great part the acceptance of the property. While on this duty Dr. Kidder also suggested several changes in the American naval rations, based upon a study of their physiological value. Subsequent to his resignation from the navy, he was called upon to investigate the purity of the air in the Hall of Representatives at the Capitol and its approaches, and in the lecture hall of the National Museum, in both instances securing practical results of great benefit.

As before mentioned, Dr. Kidder was on special service with the United States Fish Commission during the summers of 1875 and 1879, and in the latter year he made an interesting series of experiments on the animal heat of fishes. He was detailed to the Albatross in 1882 as a naval surgeon, but after holding that position for only a few months his active connec-

tion with the navy ceased, and he was appointed a civilian assistant on the Fish Commission. This change was determined mainly by the recent death of his father, of whose estate he was an administrator, and by his desire for occupation that would retain him near his family. His specific duties were those of physicist and chemist, but as the trusted adviser of Professor Baird, who had the highest regard for his ability and judgment, he contributed in many ways to the general welfare of the Commission. In the building of the marine station at Wood's Holl, Mass., begun in 1883, he took a deep personal interest, placing at the service of Professor Baird an adjoining piece of land which he had acquired for that purpose. A physical laboratory, suitably equipped for fishery investigations, was established at that place, and another of the same character in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, Dr. Kidder's time being divided between the two. His work related chiefly to water temperatures, densities, and analyses, to the purchase and testing of all physical apparatus, to experiments upon the preservation of fresh fish, and to such other kindred subjects as came within the province of the Fish Commission. His unwillingness to publish until the volume of results would seem to warrant their being placed before the public has left us with only a few printed records of his fishery studies, but it is due to him to state that the high perfection attained in the methods of physical research employed by the Commission has resulted largely from his intelligent supervision.

In the autumn of 1887, upon the death of Professor Baird and the appointment of Dr. G. Brown Goode as Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, Dr. Kidder became the Assistant Commissioner, for which position he was well qualified by his administrative ability and his intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the Commission. Resigning that office, however, early in the following year, he was appointed, in March, 1888, Curator of Laboratory and Exchanges in the Smithsonian Institution, which post he held until his death, rendering most efficient service and becoming greatly en-

deared to his associates. His surroundings were, moreover, entirely suited to his tastes, and his future seemed full of promise, with the prospect of again returning to the study of many early problems which his frequent change of duty had interrupted but not banished from his mind. His attachment for the Smithsonian Institution and appreciation of its objects were manifested in his will, by which the sum of \$5,000 was bequeathed for the promotion of physical research.

Dr. Kidder was a contributor to the National Medical Dictionary, compiled under the editorial supervision of Dr. John S. Billings, United States Army. His principal scientific papers have appeared as follows: Those relating to sanitary and kindred subjects, in the reports of the Surgeon General of the Navy from 1879 to 1882, the Proceedings of the Naval Medical Society for 1884, the reports of the Forty-eighth Congress, and the report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1884; on the natural history of Kerguelen island, in Bulletins Nos. 2 and 3 of the National Museum, published in 1875 and 1876; on fishery matters, in the reports and bulletins of the Fish Commission subsequent to 1883, and on chemistry and physics, in the publications of various scientific societies.

In the social, scientific, and literary circles of Washington, Dr. Kidder was especially prominent and influential, having been a member of the Cosmos, Metropolitan, Harvard, and Rover Clubs, and of the Philosophical, Biological, and Chemical Societies. He joined the Philosophical Society in 1880, was one of its secretaries in 1887, and a member of the general council during 1888 and 1889. He was faithful in attendance at the meetings of the Society and active in the promotion of its interests, contributing papers on deep-sea temperature observations and on the gilding of thermometer bulbs. A founder in both the Biological and Chemical Societies, he took a prominent part in their proceedings, and was an officer in each, having served as president of the latter in 1888. He had been a companion for over twenty years of the New York Commandery of the

Military Order of the Loyal Legion, and was also a zealous member of the Masonic fraternity.

Dr. Kidder was an able writer and a fluent speaker, using clear and vigorous language, and always presenting his subject in a simple and attractive manner. While not entirely at home before a formal audience, he was ready, even brilliant, in conversation, and among the "Rovers," a few well-chosen friends, whose meetings were given over to the familiar discussion of interesting topics, he never failed to take a leading part. His proficiency in writing was gained, to some extent, from an early experience with the New York journals, to which he contributed on literary and other matters during a number of years. He was an accomplished linguist, and being passionately fond of books, a choice collection that had been left to him was made the nucleus of a large and valuable library. His residence in Washington also bore evidences of his taste in art and of the opportunities in that direction afforded by his distant travel.

His final illness was of short duration and scarcely known beyond his household. In perfect health, he was stricken with pneumonia on a Friday and died on the following Monday, the 8th of April, 1889, in his forty-seventh year. In their sad bereavement the devoted wife and children had the heartfelt sympathy of every one to whom his name had become familiar, whether through personal contact or through a knowledge of his good works and sterling qualities. His loss was widely felt and his place will long be vacant.

RICHARD RATHBUN.

