

and in the very height of his fame, in the very fullness of his usefulness, his strength failed him forever. He was seized with paralysis and passed suddenly away—May 13, 1832—the very day the king had approved of his nomination as President of the Council of State.

## BARON CUVIER

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### *SELECTED STUDIES AND REMINISCENCES*

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#### CUVIER AND NAPOLEON

Napoleon, who nearly always chose the best man for a place, made Cuvier a counsellor of the new Imperial University, and the two men thus came frequently in contact. Repeated personal interviews preceded Cuvier's appointment to organize new universities in the foreign states more or less under the sway of France. He undertook the reorganization of the old Italian universities of Piedmont, Genoa, and Tuscany. His reports of these missions speak of the enlightenment of his mind and his truly reasonable and very liberal spirit. Speaking of the universities of Tuscany, he deprecates a too hasty and rash interference with institutions which had been founded and maintained by so many distinguished men of old, and in which he found so much to praise and to retain. He examined into the condition of the universities of Holland, and finally those of lower Germany. These journeys were doubly useful, for they established his health and gave him plenty of opportunity of visiting museums. While at Hamburg, Napoleon gave him the title of chevalier, which was confirmed to him and his heirs. But such honors were not

set to work reading, but suffered the ladies to talk as much as they pleased. The family dinner hour was half-past six; and if Cuvier had a few moments to spare before that time he would occasionally join his friends in Madame Cuvier's room, but more frequently he seems to have given even this short time to study. One or two intimate friends joined the circle at dinner, and then Cuvier's conversation was delightful. On proceeding to the drawing-room Cuvier sometimes gratified his friends by an hour's stay among them before he retired to his occupation or his visits, but so untiring was his industry, that he often set the whole party to work aiding him in his researches. If he had any foreign works, he would often amuse his friends by verifying the figures in them, one after the other. It must be said that this everlasting work was trying to people who were with Cuvier, for no sooner did friends come to stay with him than he began to use them in tracing drawings on paper. He kept them at work, for when he returned from his labors he generally asked for the tasks he had thus set. Nevertheless, many found it a real pleasure to work for him, for he was very grateful for such assistance. Cuvier's hours of relaxation were few. Change of employment afforded him relief, and conversation still greater. At the close of the day's labor, when he found it impossible to work any longer, he was accustomed to throw himself on a sofa, hide his eyes from the light, and listen to the reading of his wife or daughter, and sometimes of his secretary. These nightly readings lasted two hours, and thus Cuvier became more or less acquainted with the current literature and good works of the day.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S.

## CUVIER'S PRIVATE AND DOMESTIC LIFE

When in the full swing of his career, Cuvier gave very interesting *soirées* on Saturday evenings, and it is said that they were the most brilliant and interesting meetings of their kind in Paris. They were much frequented by the scientific world of the time, and the rooms were as much open to the prince as to the last young student who had just begun to study natural history. In this society Cuvier was an amusing conversationalist, a great asker of questions; and as he could talk well on a great variety of subjects, he made his guests at home, and gave the meetings a character for freedom of expression of opinion. A light repast concluded the evening, and a select few remained to partake of it. The chat was amusing, curiosities were shown about, and the last anecdotes about nature and the newest ideas were shown and considered, and, reserving himself to the last, Cuvier would relate something that crowned the whole; and all around were struck by the occasional complete change given to the train of thought, or were forced to join in a general shout of laughter. The period of these brilliant *soirées* was that of the prime of the lovely daughter who was so fondly loved by Cuvier. A perfect lady, of great grace and goodness, was Clémentine Cuvier. She was a highly-gifted girl, and her resemblance to her father was remarkable. She had a delicate constitution, and gradually faded away, dying of rapid consumption at last amidst the joyful preparations for her marriage. A great change then took place in Cuvier, who mourned his daughter greatly. Society was given up for

a long time, and when the evening meetings were resumed, the life of them seemed to be gone, and the dejection of Madame Cuvier added to the feeling. After the death of his own daughter, Cuvier became more than ever attached to his step-daughter, and his care and anxiety on her account manifested itself on all occasions. If she were ill he would be up and down stairs over and over again, and worried himself about even the most trivial symptoms. Although so greatly occupied and so often absorbed in scientific pursuits, he never neglected the opportunity of doing good in his way. His private charities were large and well-bestowed. His purse was ever open to the needy and unfortunate of all countries and stations; and the miserable inhabitants of the dens of Paris and the modest student struggling under adversity were alike the recipients of his bounty. Many hotels in the neighborhood of the colleges and institutions had students in them, living in the top stories, who were so poor that they had to subscribe to get a book or two between them. They would occasionally be surprised by a visit from their great teacher. He came to offer, with the greatest courtesy, the assistance he knew they required; and if they were ill, he did not rest satisfied until he had obtained advice and nourishment for them. Himself keenly alive to the slightest rudeness or neglect, and grateful for the smallest proof of affection, he knew how to give not only with a liberal hand, but with a delicacy which never wounded the most sensitive temper.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S.

#### CUVIER'S DEATH AND FUNERAL

Convinced that all human skill was in vain, Cuvier nev-

ertheless submitted to treatment by his medical men. Paralysis crept on, and the legs were attacked, his speech was affected, and he muttered, "It is the nerves of volition that are affected." He spoke of his last lecture, and said to a friend who called, "Behold a very different person from the man of Tuesday; nevertheless I had great things still to do. All was ready in my head, after thirty years of labor and research; there remained but to write, and now the hands fail, and carry with them the head." Cuvier gradually sank, but kept his intelligence nearly to the last. It was his wish to be buried privately, interred in the cemetery of Père le Chaise, under the tombstone which covered his beloved child; but it was not possible to avoid the public demonstration of respect. The funeral procession was followed by the representatives of all the great learned bodies of France.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S.

#### READERS' AND STUDENTS' NOTES

Popular accounts of Cuvier are not very accessible. The best perhaps are to be found in such works as the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*." In P. Martin Duncan's "*Heroes of Science—Botanists, Zoologists, and Geologists*" (New York: E. & J. B. Young & Co.) a whole chapter, and a very readable one, is devoted to Cuvier. So also in Sarah K. Bolton's "*Famous Men of Science*" (New York: T. Y. Crowell & Co., \$1.50). Cuvier's work will also be found duly chronicled in Miss Buckley's "*Short History of Natural Science*" (New York: D. Appleton & Co.).

destined to descend, for Cuvier lost his son in his seventh year. It was a great grief, and it saddened and subdued the man. This trial happened when Cuvier was at Rome, trying to arrange the universities there.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S., F. L. S., in "*Heroes of Science—Botanists, Zoologists, and Geologists.*"

#### CUVIER'S WORK FOR STATE EDUCATION

After the abdication of Napoleon and the defeat at Waterloo, it became necessary, in the ideas of Louis XVIII., that the universities should be remodelled, and a committee of public instruction was created to exercise the powers formerly belonging to the grand master, the council, and the treasurer of the University. Cuvier was one of the committee, and was made Chancellor of the University, a position which he retained under most trying circumstances until his death. No man did greater or better and more lasting work for state education than Cuvier. His heart was in the work of education; he had nothing but mental progress to desire; and it was a much more satisfactory thing for France to have a renowned, scientific man at the head of a great university, who, moreover, really controlled the education of the country, than to have such important offices held by mere politicians and soldiers.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S.

#### CUVIER'S PERSONALITY

Cuvier was slightly built in his young days, and moderately tall; but the sedentary nature of his work, and his carelessness about taking proper exercise, produced cor-

rupture in his later years, and his extreme near-sightedness brought on a slight stoop in his shoulders. His hair had been light in colour, and to the last it flowed in fine curls over one of the noblest heads ever seen. He was handsome and had regular features, with an aquiline nose, a broad forehead, and keen eyes. The love of order, which was his very peculiarity in his work, was seen in little things, for Cuvier was almost feminine in his attention to dress. He even took in hand the costume of the University and designed the embroidery of his court suits.—PROFESSOR P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F. R. S.

#### CUVIER'S HABIT OF CONTINUOUS WORK

Cuvier's domestic life was the kind of life that has to be led by most prominent men in science, art, and literature. Work, everlasting work, with but little relaxation! He certainly wasted no time. Before and after breakfast he saw anybody who wished to have an audience of him. By seven in the morning he was dressed, and began preparing his day's work and that of his assistants, so that by ten o'clock, when he breakfasted, he had time to look at the newspapers, to read correspondence, and look over any particular works. After breakfast he dressed for the day and began work. His carriage was punctual to a moment, and no one was allowed to keep him waiting. When the ladies were to accompany him, they made a point of being as exact to time as was possible; and he seems to have enjoyed the sight of his womankind rushing down stairs with their shawls streaming after them and their gloves half on their hands. The instant he had given his orders, he would thrust himself into a corner of the carriage and