

OBITUARY.

James Andrew Kershaw, Director, National Museum of Victoria, 1929-1931.

The passing of James Andrew Kershaw, Director of the National Museum of Victoria from 1929 to 1931, not only terminates the long association of the Kershaw family with science in Victoria, but breaks a link with such pioneers as Sir Frederick McCoy, Baron von Mueller, Dr. Alfred Howitt, and others who laid the foundations for modern scientific research in Australia.

James Kershaw was born on April 13, 1866, at Fitzroy, Victoria, educated at the Alma Road State School and the Grammar School, East Street, St. Kilda, and appointed to the staff of the National Museum by Sir Frederick McCoy on October 1, 1883. His father, William Kershaw, had been a member of the staff since 1856, when he and Henry Edwards, the well-known actor, were appointed as Lepidopterists. The period of young Kershaw's training coincided with the scientific revival of the closing decades of last century—a revival brought about by the publication by McCoy of his *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria*. That period might well be called the Taxonomic Period, for, during it, scientific work consisted chiefly of the description of genera and species.

After the death of McCoy in May 1899, the Museum was moved from the University grounds to its present site, and Sir W. Baldwin Spencer became its Honorary Director. He resigned in 1929, and James Kershaw then became Director. On his retirement in 1931, Kershaw was appointed Honorary Curator in Zoology, interesting himself in all matters connected with Zoology, and particularly in the groups of which he was a specialist. He retained this interest to the end—only a few minutes before he died on February 16, 1946, he had been discussing with one of the younger school a matter of common scientific interest.

He was keenly interested in the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, and his papers in its journal cover a wide range of subjects. He took a prominent part in securing the permanent reservation of Wilson's Promontory as a National Park and a sanctuary for the preservation of the native fauna and flora. He was Honorary Secretary to the Committee of Management continuously from its inception in 1908 to 1946. He became a member of the Royal Society of Victoria in 1900, a member of its Council in 1902, and



The late James Andrew Kershaw
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its President in 1918. He was Honorary Secretary of that Society from 1920 to 1923, appointed a Trustee in 1922, and was Honorary Librarian from 1924 to 1925. In 1934, he was elected Vice-President of the Zoological Section of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. From an early date, he had been a Fellow of the Entomological Society of London. In 1927, he was elected a Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society of London.

It is to be expected that one who had led such an active life would have travelled far. In 1908, he accompanied the Royal Australian Ornithological Union's expedition to Bass Strait—in 1909, he again visited the Bass Strait Islands; in 1913, he journeyed with Dr. MacGillivray and his son to Lloyd Bay, Queensland, to examine the Barrier Reef; in 1911, he investigated the life habits of the Platypus in the Hopkins River, Victoria; and, in 1921, visited, with J. G. Davidson, Ooldea in Western Australia, where his interests were ethnology and general zoology.

Although James Kershaw was habitually kind and urbane, he could be, when occasion demanded, strong and forceful. Those who worked with him esteemed him for his sincerity and single-mindedness of purpose; the advancement of science was always his aim, and he subserved personal ambition to achieve it. Truth was the watchword throughout his simple life—he stood and fought for his convictions.

—R. A. K.