

CENTENARIES

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Bachet, Gaspard (1593-1638)

GASPARD BACHET, a French mathematician, was born in 1593. He was a great linguist, who had obtained proficiency in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Italian and Spanish. He possessed also remarkable mathematical powers.

HIS WORK

He specialised in the study of Diophantine Equations. He gave a complete general solution of indeterminate equations of the first degree in his book entitled *Problèmes plaisants et delectables que se font par les nombres* (1612). This book gave a complete discussion of the famous "Boat problem". It went through a second edition in 1624 and Gauthier-Villars published a reprint of it in 1876.

In another work of his, *Elements arithmétiques*, he discussed several properties of prime numbers and of the three progressions. He also translated the works of Diophante under the title *Diophanti Alexandrini arithmeticonum libri sex et de numeris multangulis liber unus* (1621).

HIS HONOURS

He was elected (1625) as one of the earliest members of the French Academy of Sciences.

Bachet died at Paris February 28, 1638.

Eberle, John (1787-1838)

JOHN EBERLE, an American physician, was born December 10, 1787. His father was a blacksmith. Eberle had no early educational advantages; but being constant reader he acquired sufficient knowledge to enable him to begin the study of medicine. He entered the University of Pennsylvania in 1806, where he graduated three years later, his thesis being on *Animal-life*.

HIS PUBLICATIONS

About 1818, he founded and became the editor of the *American medical recorder*. This periodical was so well received that he was elected to the German Academy of the Natural Sciences. He published *Botanical terminology* for students of botany. His *Treatise of the materia medica and therapeutics* (1823) went through several editions. He participated in the foundation of the Jefferson Medical College (1825) and became

its first professor of materia medica. His *Notes of lectures on the theory and practice of medicine* was produced during this period and it went through several editions. From 1824 to 1826 he was editor of the *American medical review*. In 1832 he published his *Treatise on the disease and physical education of children*.

Eberle was a brilliant teacher. He advocated the theory of physiological drug action as opposed to "solidism" as taught by others.

He died in Lexington, February 2, 1838.

Beilstein, Fridrich Konrad (1838-1906)

F. K. BEILSTEIN, a Russian chemist, was born in St. Petersburg, February 5, 1838. He studied chemistry both under Bunsen of Heidelberg and Liebig of Munich. Having been assistant professor of chemistry at the Breslau University for seven years, he became professor of chemistry at the St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1866 and remained as such the rest of his life.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

He began to publish papers even in his eighteenth year. His first paper was entitled *Über die diffusion von flüchtigkeiten* and was published in V. 99 of the *Annalen der chemie*, conducted by his professor, Liebig. As many as 86 papers were produced by him including 32 joint ones. His work was chiefly on organic and analytic chemistry. His work on the aromatic compounds gave a new direction to industry.

Beilstein is best known for his *Handbuch der organischen chemie*, which is a reference work of supreme value. It is a monument of his patience and industry. The first edition appeared in 1881-83 in two volumes and the second in 1886-90 in three. These were prepared without help. With but one assistant he published the third edition in 1892-99. Thereafter the Deutsche Chemische Gesellschaft took over the publication. A fourth edition was started in 1918 and is still incomplete.

Beilstein became a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences in 1886.

Beilstein died at St. Petersburg, October 19, 1906.